

Reclaiming the Culture of Higher Education

A best practices
guide for advancing
open inquiry,
viewpoint diversity,
and constructive
disagreement

heterodox   academy

great minds don't always think alike

2022

We want to hear from you!

Dear Reader,

Thanks for checking out *Reclaiming the Culture of Higher Education*. We are excited to share ideas and strategies for strengthening the pursuit of truth and knowledge in higher education. Everything you read here was shared by expert HxA practitioners eager to offer lessons learned from challenges and successes in the field.

What you're reading is a draft — an initial collection meant to start a conversation. That's where you come in! HxA exists for its members, and its members are its strongest asset. **We want to hear from you.** How can this Guide be as helpful as possible? What's missing? And what are you seeing or doing that bolsters the ideals of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement so crucial for our pursuit of truth and knowledge? The best version of this Guide bottles up the lessons and successes of our broad and varied audience for the good of ourselves and of those confused, disheartened, and wondering what to do next.

To that end, we are hosting a variety of programs that gather your successful strategies and put this draft under the microscope. We invite you to consider what needs to be added, restructured, and revisited. Members and friends, please stay tuned for communication about how you can get involved.

Warm wishes,

Kyle Sebastian Vitale, Co-Editor and HxA Director of Programs

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Reclaiming the Culture of Higher Education

A best practices guide to advancing open inquiry, viewpoint diversity,
and constructive disagreement

Heterodox Academy, 2022

Higher education is struggling.

Students self-censor in the face of peer pressure and rigid ideologies in the classroom. Scholars struggle to research and write freely inside disciplinary echo chambers and ruling orthodoxies. Increasing incidents of campus disruption, canceling, and shaming disincentivize bold dialogue across difference.

Thankfully, faculty, students, staff, and administrators are working everywhere to change campus culture for the better and to renew higher education's commitment to the rigorous pursuit of knowledge and truth. This Guide is a compilation of their best strategies and approaches.

At Heterodox Academy (HxA) we believe the culture can change by embracing open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement in the classroom, in the disciplines, on the quad, and in the C-suite. In this Guide, readers will find practices, approaches, and ideas for embracing these values no matter where they find themselves on campus.

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Why a Best Practices Guide?

Open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement sit at the heart of the American college and university mission. They anchor teaching, learning, and our core pursuit of truth and knowledge. These values are increasingly essential if we wish to address recent negative ideologies and practices that are challenging our core purpose on campus and in the disciplines.

Those negative practices are legion. The allure to lean on entrenched orthodoxies in scholarly and classroom discussion shuts down entire worldviews. Shaming, ostracizing, and shouting out oppositional positions seem more and more to be a campus norm. Events like the September 2021 cancellation of Dorian Abbot's MIT lecture and the March 2022 disruption at Yale Law School bear out these realities and are just a few among many, many more.¹

Social and professional retaliations are now a prevalent fear, and too often the reality, when questioning or challenging many a stated norm. Data from Heterodox Academy's Campus Expression Survey found that in 2021, 60% of sampled college students expressed reluctance to discuss at least one controversial topic, illustrating that campus climate may prevent students from saying things they believe.²

Research increasingly indicates that faculty and students regularly self-censor to avoid peer criticism and ostracization. This poisonous mindset spreads beyond intellectual corridors into relationships too. A recent Generation Lab/Axios poll indicated that "nearly a quarter of college students wouldn't be friends with someone who voted for the other presidential candidate."³

We at HxA believe that the best way to prevent canceling, self-censorship, and authoritarian ideology from taking root in the Academy is to embody a different practice grounded in a shared pursuit of truth. After all, hungry intellects seek answers and greater objectivity about themselves, the world, and reality. This pursuit in turn invites curiosity for one another's views, courage to wade into disagreement, and when possible, winsomeness when engaging with others.

Yet it is not always obvious how best to advance these principles — which HxA distills into open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement — in a complex campus ecosystem. This Guide aims to make visible some best practices that can create campuses rich with these values.

It is stocked with practices, strategies, and ideas from individuals at every level of the university who have found successful ways to promote these values at their institutions.

Our Guide organizes these perspectives into three areas that make the university's complexity easier to navigate: Institutional Affairs, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs. Across these categories a range of university citizens, from faculty and graduate instructors to student leaders, senior leaders, and administrative personnel, will find practices and pathways forward.

While not every suggestion will be appropriate within every institutional context, our hope is that there is something here for everyone. The Guide was developed by a team of higher education stakeholders from college and university presidents, faculty, and staff to graduate and undergraduate students, campus partners, and consultants with deep institutional expertise. Its recommendations rest on sound expertise developed from countless hours spent in trial and error, victory and frustration, reflection and application. It emerges from local stories, observation of campus success, emerging consensus around our core principles, and a growing bibliography of qualitative and quantitative study.

As we weather and brace for yet more turbulent times, we hope this Guide can be a lodestar, a guiding light toward greater institutional effectiveness and pursuits of knowledge. Of course, no guide can be comprehensive. For readers seeking to learn about further practices they can adopt, we suggest checking out Heterodox Academy's growing Tools and Resources Library.⁴ And remember: Great minds don't always think alike!

Who Is This Guide For?

We intend this Guide to speak broadly to the huge variety of roles on campus and recognize that readers are located on a spectrum of professional skills and experience. Some have been doing this work for a while and seek cutting-edge ideas for confronting the latest threat to the pursuit of curiosity and knowledge. Others are fresh to campus and to this work, ready to adopt new practices but unsure where to start. No matter where you place yourself, we invite you to keep reading.

By and large, this early draft seeks to equip those who are committed to HxA values and want to effect change on campus or build up initial practices. In many cases, recommendations offer foundational practices for the classroom or student groups that embody the HxA Way;⁵ curriculum structures and hiring incentives that form the grounding for learning and employment; and essential habits for administrators to follow and model.

Often this is the hardest step, finding the courage to point out problems and building those early initiatives that get the ball rolling. Take heart, and read on!

That said, experienced readers will find much to value here and many ways to build on their existing endeavors. We also invite these experienced readers to reach out in the coming months with the advanced strategies they have found successful for maintaining and deepening productive cultures of dialogue, truth, and knowledge.

Guiding Principles

Throughout this Guide, readers will repeatedly find HxA's core values: open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement.⁶

Open inquiry is the ability to ask questions and share ideas without risk of censure. In pursuit of the core academic mission of higher education, students, faculty, and others need to feel free to ask a range of questions in good faith and put nuanced ideas into conversation. This freedom can wither in the face of reprisal or restrictions over what constitutes acceptable subject matter.

Inextricable from open inquiry, **viewpoint diversity** allows diverse peoples with diverse perspectives to come together and challenge claims, deepen understanding, and advance solutions to the world's toughest problems. If intellectual perspectives are controlled, marginalized, or dismissed, they take with them these valuable insights and solutions.

But these values can only succeed if the individuals practicing them engage in **constructive disagreement**, or discussion across lines of difference in ways that sharpen our own claims and encourage each other's intellectual pursuits. More so than simply noting one's biases and self-censoring, when students and scholars practice intellectual humility, empathy, trust, and curiosity, we step closer to engaged and respectful debate.

The hope in these values is not that we win arguments, but rather that we learn to hear and encourage one another, have thick enough skin to resist reacting to inflammatory language, respond thoughtfully and with appropriate context, and collectively move closer to greater truth and knowledge.

Because this Guide includes voices from a range of backgrounds, institutions, and experiences, at times these terms may alternate with close synonyms: "Viewpoint diversity" is sometimes rendered as "intellectual diversity," "open" and "free" inquiry are sometimes interchanged, and "constructive disagreement" sometimes appears as "dialogue across difference." We have chosen to maintain these slight derivations in order to respect the different local adoptions of these principles; at all times, we intend the definitions as presented above.

How to Use This Guide

This Guide aims to engage the diverse stakeholders who can champion open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement throughout higher education. As a result, we provide approaches and strategies for infusing these values throughout the missional, strategic, programmatic, and operational sectors of campus.

We believe it takes both grassroots and C-suite action to move the complex, sometimes fractal culture of higher education. Of course, one size won't fit all, so the practices found throughout this Guide seek to be just specific enough to help readers imagine action, while general enough for adaptation to a variety of contexts.

Each section, described in further detail below, contains three core elements: a set of easy-to-digest recommendations with brief explanatory text; steps toward implementation keyed where possible to specific roles on campus; and at key moments, examples that illustrate recommendations in practice. We encourage readers to explore all areas of the Guide, take notes in the spaces provided, and imagine versions of these recommendations in action at their institutions.

Section I: Institutional Affairs

How are mindsets and values introduced to students and employees as they first explore an institution? How can a strategic plan integrate open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement into the heart of an institution? The intellectual climate of a campus rests as much on hiring, senior strategy, and admissions as it does on the classroom. Ensuring an institution signals core values from first contact with prospective students and employees to the actions that senior leaders model every day can further reinforce them in the daily practices of teaching, writing, and dialogue.

In this section:

Executive administrators will find crucial practices for articulating philosophies, making policies, and modeling action that points campus culture toward truth and productive dialogue, explicitly connecting these values to their institution's stated mission and values.

Presidents in particular will find practical encouragement to stand for and live out core university purpose in their personal actions, administrations, and engagements with internal and external stakeholders.

Officers of institutional effectiveness will find guidance for ensuring university strategy and metrics that track the relative strength of the Guide's principles at all levels of campus operations.

Supervisors and human resources personnel will find ways to inform employee hiring, wellness, and development with the benefits of intellectual diversity and constructive engagement.

Admissions staff will find supports for ensuring prospective students comprehend an institution's values and feel encouraged to embrace them.

Community liaisons will find strategies for ensuring an institution's partnerships support open intellectual exchange rather than signal entrenched orthodoxies.

Section II: Student Affairs

How can student leaders maintain vigorous intellectual exchange in governance? How do student groups embody, rather than reject, open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement? The role of cocurricular programs should not be overlooked or underestimated. On many campuses these values live or die in residence halls, student groups, public events, and more. New-student orientations, high-profile lecture series, and student-led groups have incredible power to set the tone and help students, faculty, and administrators understand and reinforce what it means to voice concerns across difference in a positive and constructive manner.

In this section:

Student government leaders will find guidance on protecting the rights and expression of the range of members and voices they represent.

Students and faculty who advise student groups will find supports for creating, advancing, and managing groups bold in expression and robustly engaged in campus dialogue across difference.

Event organizers will find ideas for ensuring campus events encourage robust exchange and signal a drive for truth and knowledge first.

Student affairs personnel will find ideas for activities and programming that help students value open and engaged discussion over self-censorship and fear of offense.

Section III: Academic Affairs

How can instructors create learning environments where students ask bold questions, endure difficult moments, and expect encouragement rather than reprisal? How do scholars shatter echo chambers in their disciplines? What can university staff do to encourage a bold intellectual environment that stokes curiosity and tenacious questioning? This section incorporates practices that support intellectual life in its traditional scholarly and classroom settings, along with supports for the vital, integral work of staff like librarians and university center professionals who deeply enrich university knowledge.

In this section:

Instructors and course coordinators will find easy-to-adopt practices for embedding open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement in the syllabus, curriculum, and daily classroom climate.

Scholars and researchers will find useful strategies for engaging in disciplinary debate, mounting bold arguments, and developing effective writing strategies in a complex intellectual culture.

Staff in university libraries, teaching centers, and more will find encouraging ideas for promoting intellectual diversity and professional development opportunities that expand, rather than cap, intellectual practice.

Further Resources

Although this Guide marks out three formal “zones” of higher education, things are often much messier. We engage with people and ideologies in hundreds of small and unexpected moments throughout our day, and we’re often not able to predict them. How do we respond to attempted silencing, of either ourselves or a colleague? What’s the response when we find ourselves utterly at odds with an opposing moral frame or antagonistic person?

This section shares some of the most popular existing tools in the HxA Tools and Resources Library, offering effective approaches for connecting across difference and navigating moments of attempted cancellation, public denunciations, and censure. All readers, from presidents to student leaders, can find something here that helps equip them for the days, months, and years ahead.

General Bibliography

In addition to practical supports, this Guide also offers a first-of-its-kind bibliography, aggregating studies, readings, and fresh insights from the growing body of evidence and scholarly consensus around open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement. In addition to its personal value as a reading list, the bibliography is a useful tool when defending these values on campus and to colleagues. We welcome suggestions for further inputs as we seek to grow it for future iterations of the Guide.

A Word on Alignment

Some of the suggestions in this Guide might fit well with the culture of one institution and only align in part with the culture of another. This reflects both the limits of any one guide and the fact that higher education is a general idea that materializes specifically through the local cultures, histories, and norms of a given place. It is a prism showcasing human and intellectual particularity. While the spectrum is dense, we can note patterns, evidence, and replicated successes that suggest ideal practices for all, mediated by the places we find ourselves.

As such, those who wish to advance the practices in this Guide should be choosy. Where possible, readers should select strategies that build bridges and nicely align with available bandwidth and other resources at their institutions. Sometimes bold action and forced momentum is necessary; we leave it to readers to evaluate the needs they seek to address.

We hope this Guide inspires individuals to take action in their lives. We can also imagine a diverse group of campus stakeholders representing students, staff, faculty, and administrators coming together to design a coherent implementation plan that would leverage the talents, perspectives, and resources of all. It takes the combined efforts of individuals and communities of practice to effect cultural change, and we encourage any effort to improve open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement on campus.

A Note on Academic Work Culture

This Guide is full of success stories — every contributor has shared things that work, that effectively advance personal practices, change minds, or push institutions closer to the productive pursuit of truth.

At the same time, HxA is highly cognizant that most professionals in higher education are overworked, and that the work itself often creeps and shifts in ways that further burden us. We are not here to advise *doing more* where doing more means further stress. Many of these practices instead seek to suggest *doing differently*, and they try to meet professionals where they already are. A small step taken with energy and commitment does far more good than a big project adopted with exhaustion or distraction.

Similarly, we address significant portions of this Guide to administrators and related professionals while acknowledging that charges of increased “administrative glut” have been leveled at higher education for some time. Again, our aim here is to meet institutions where they are — rather than propose greater or lesser administrative presence, we wish to help readers evaluate and work with the offices and staff currently in place. Questions of expanding or decreasing administrative presence will vary by school and region. We hope these practices help improve the work of whomever they reach.

In short, we hope this Guide meets you where you are. And we suggest *putting this Guide in front of others with similar readiness*. Find the allies, supportive neighbors, concerned colleagues, or even HxA members on your campus and empower them with some fresh ideas. Show them that another way is possible, that campuses are rife with stories of people empowered to joyfully do *more* than self-censor and sit tight.

Maybe you're on a campus that is already succeeding here. If so, what is your next step? On other campuses you might have existing “pockets of excellence” in one functional area (e.g., a set of required general education courses with a substantial viewpoint diversity component) but other areas bereft of these values. How do you enlarge the spheres of excellence already extant or start to build a new foundation for areas needing help?

By offering this Guide, HxA hopes to come alongside you and share a vision for what could be done, as well as suggestions for getting started. We hope these ideas inspire and encourage, and we'd love to hear from you about what worked and what else could be tried.



Practices for **Institutional Affairs**

Introduction

Our core institutional work of teaching, inquiring, and supporting student wellness thrives when administration and infrastructure support it. From integrating viewpoint diversity into the strategic plan to modeling constructive disagreement as senior administrators, those working for institutional operations and growth can encourage and affirm the institution's commitments to intellectual diversity. These positions and perspectives also allow administrative teams to gauge a campus culture's general intellectual health and draw on diverse campus perspectives when implementing measures to improve it. These efforts can include admissions all the way up to the composition of the senior cabinet. They should ensure that the administrative and academic sides of the institution communicate and share goals for intellectual diversity.

In this section readers will find recommendations for imbuing our guiding principles into senior administrative culture, university metrics and data, employee life cycles, and admissions procedures. Readers who will find this section helpful include presidents and provosts, vice and associate provosts, admissions staff, institutional effectiveness staff, supervisors, human resources professionals, and related professional positions.

Presidents

College and university presidents occupy a unique role on campus, facing inward to foster a rich academic environment from the top while facing outward to engage with partners and donors and represent the institution to the broader community. As such, they can help shape campus culture while also representing it, requiring them to be plugged into the academic, extracurricular, and operational spheres of an institution. They can work both proactively and reactively to cultivate a campus environment rich with open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement. They are the gatekeepers and chief advocates for an open, inclusive, healthy culture.

Be “curator in chief” of intellectual diversity on campus.

College and university presidents can proactively set a tone from the top that values diversity of perspectives on campus and seeks to strengthen spaces for underrepresented views that have educative potential. As curator in chief, the president can amplify the intellectual influence they have on campus, encourage all departments and units to uphold viewpoint diversity, raise awareness about underrepresented or less popular but important values in various fields, and invite disciplines to collaborate and pursue their own inquiries as appropriate. Establishing a diverse intellectual culture can enrich learning, help more faculty and students find intellectual homes, and preempt mere provocation or performative activism.

Implementation

- Raise concerns about intellectual bias or viewpoint gaps in faculty meetings and faculty executive meetings, inquiring about existing intellectual culture and encouraging faculty to develop strategies for expanding their cultures of inquiry and teaching.
- Challenge committees on educational policy and curriculum review to consider a wider variety of perspectives and course offerings.
- Find faculty and student allies with whom to make proposals about improving course offerings in underserved areas in the disciplines.
- Fundraise for new budget lines that can support conversations or programs around free inquiry and intellectual diversity, rather than requiring departments to spend down their own funds to provide such programs.

- Support, or host, spaces like forums and communities of practice that explore intellectual diversity, pose enduring questions to elevate debates that typically become quandaries, and shed light on underrepresented views or lines of inquiry.
- Write regularly in campus news, student papers, and academic presses about the benefits to campus of intellectual diversity, freedom of inquiry, and spheres where additional work is needed; as the campus's chief champion, issue calls to action for improving the intellectual atmosphere.
- Personally model constructive disagreement and dialogue across difference in public forums, scholarship, and the media.



Example for adaptation

Next Thursday: Join President Stuart-Mill at the next Viewpoint Forum to discuss the role of religious faith in intellectual inquiry and creative practice. He'll engage with faculty and students from the departments of Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Sociology. As always, space is limited, so RSVP soon! Nonalcoholic drinks are welcome, and the first 50 RSVPs will receive free drink tickets for the campus café. Discussion will be followed by ample time for Q&A from the audience.

Have an idea for a future forum topic? We're interested! Faculty, staff, and students are welcome to suggest future topics by emailing us.

Be a fierce protector of academic freedom, basic safety, and campus well-being.

Faculty and students must be resilient in the face of intellectual challenges, and learning frequently takes place when we grow uncomfortable with our own assumptions or beliefs. Yet inquiry is unlikely to be productive if faculty and students feel intimidated or harassed. It is incumbent upon college and university presidents to ensure members of the community feel safe enough to be open to difference and not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, or physical violence. This can be tricky: Presidents should signal that while individuals cannot be protected against offense, they can fully expect a culture of fundamental physical and mental well-being. This defensive balance allows for free inquiry and bold discussion unhampered by fear or threats.

Implementation

- Engage with but resist actions that threaten practices of inquiry, including unreasonable demands from student groups, faculty or disciplinary boycotts, threats of campus event disruptions, and rhetoric that seeks to shut down opposing views; affirm felt emotion but be a voice that clarifies the difference between offense and harm and the value of entertaining opposing views.
- In speeches, faculty meetings, and published writing, regularly underscore the administration's support for academic freedom and the rights of faculty to pursue all inquiry in good faith.
- Be prepared to swiftly evaluate if controversial speakers or groups act out of bad faith or a desire merely to intimidate, especially those who have historically been vulnerable. Be ready to swiftly explain decisions to shut down or support a given event or talk.
- Liaise regularly with campus security to ensure policies are clear, expectations are set for controversial events, and, when incidents occur, the facts are made clear swiftly, before spiraling in student newspapers.
- Beyond yearly reporting requirements, host regular forums that clarify policies and procedures around campus safety and academic freedom, helping individuals understand rights and typical protocols before they are misinterpreted.

Build an administration that supports intellectual inquiry.

Presidents do not act alone. Depending on college or university structure, their provosts might hold significant purview over academic affairs, and their entire office likely liaises across campus. As such, the president's office should be plugged into academic culture and senior administrators should share a love and commitment to free inquiry and dialogue across difference, even if the content of their actual beliefs differs. A cohesive senior office can support campus culture broadly, make decisions around campus incidents and complex issues more effectively, and lead with the values they seek to instill on campus.

Implementation

- Install provosts and vice provosts who value and can effectively dialogue across difference, working regularly with them to evaluate campus culture and find ways to encourage intellectual diversity at all levels and in all spaces.

- Ensure hiring policies for associate provosts and deans signal a working ethos that supports viewpoint diversity and constructive disagreement, and expects candidates to support these principles on campus.
- Ensure administration has the space and skills to interface regularly with leaders in student life in order to narrow any perceived gaps in communication or understanding between leadership and daily student experiences.
- Practice accountability measures for self and senior colleagues that ensure the office owns its commitments to support space for underrepresented views, does not ignore or shy away from unpopular views or perspectives, and practices constructive disagreement when engaging across the campus community.

Represent and convey campus values to external stakeholders and the community.

College and university presidents must be able to cultivate intellectual diversity and dialogue across difference while signaling those values to groups that support and collaborate with the campus. Presidents can strengthen and restore trust in their institutions by telling success stories about campus dialogue and inquiry, speaking in effective ways that avoid jargon about campus values, and assuring others that the institution is primarily devoted to the pursuit and consideration of knowledge that can enrich individuals and the community.

Implementation

- Reinforce in donor events, alumni receptions, and engagements with the media some of the specific, practical ways the institution supports free inquiry and constructive disagreement.
- In public writing and speeches, emphasize the belief in an educational environment where freedom of inquiry demands that people understand they might be wrong about what they believe and seek to learn habits of intellectual humility, tolerance, and devotion to inquiry.
- On the Office of the President's website and in the strategic plan, ensure open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement are set as key goals with road maps, deliverables, and clear measures for the campus community, stakeholders, and partners to see.

- Work to create partnerships and collaborations in good faith with organizations and institutions that hold a range of perspectives, provide diverse intellectual opportunities for students, and showcase the institution's priorities in its choice of friends and peers.
- If appropriate, personally pursue scholarship, intellectual inquiry, and teaching in ways that publicly model the values prioritized by the institution and show stakeholders and partners that leadership practices what it preaches.
- Say often, "but I may be wrong," which may encourage others to have an attitude of intellectual humility.



Example for adaptation

As administration gears up to draft a new strategic plan, the president calls for a subcommittee on intellectual diversity. The committee includes faculty and staff from across the university's colleges, departments, and intellectual units (e.g., library services, student support, center for teaching) and is tasked to articulate characteristics of an intellectually diverse campus, measure the current campus intellectual climate, and establish reasonable five-year goals with associated measures. The subcommittee starts by administering a Campus Expression Survey for students and requests that deans and department chairs qualitatively survey faculty about the felt intellectual environment in their colleges and departments. This information informs reasonable goals and measures, and some of the data is made available on the strategic plan website for the campus community and external stakeholders to understand the needs of the strategic goals.

Institutional Data and Measurement

Higher education is under huge flux and strain as an entire system. The change in student population over time has the potential to reflect lessening interest in higher education as price points and delivery modes shift. Tracking the regional causes for these shifts and ensuring that an institution's grasp of its data is strong depends on institutional affairs offices rich with intellectual diversity and self-awareness of the many stakeholders of higher education. These offices can be devoted to truth-seeking and helping institutions comprehend data as clearly as possible to determine institutional effectiveness.

Implementation

- Staff in offices of institutional effectiveness and/or research can work with provosts, deans, and faculty to consider how existing data collections portray campus climate.
- These same staff can work toward new approaches that collect and process unstructured data with natural language processing themed to intellectual diversity and constructive disagreements on campus.
- These offices can work with interested parties — chairs, deans, provosts — to design new surveys that flesh out existing data or draw in new data for specific departments, colleges, or other campus localities to consider and act on.
- Provosts and other senior administrators can improve processes and reviews that ensure collected data is considered and that offices of institutional effectiveness work well with campus academic offices seeking to improve climate around intellectual diversity.
- Where possible, provosts and hiring committees can ensure that offices responsible for data collection, analysis, and reporting are staffed with scholars representing a diverse range of viewpoints to ensure broad purposes and uses of university data.



Example for adaptation

Syllabus information is often collected on campus, but it typically sits in deans' offices. Moreover, syllabuses are increasingly required in campus learning management systems but are usually loaded as pdfs, which cannot be language processed or easily collated.



Example for adaptation (continued)

To resolve technical challenges, departments, administrators, or offices of institutional effectiveness could design inputs that place learning outcomes and statements on viewpoint diversity in separate boxes for collation. To resolve process challenges, these offices can interface with provosts and deans to regularly review learning outcomes for a focus on viewpoint diversity and constructive disagreement.

Processes like this can easily paint a broader picture of learning norms on campus and supply helpful action steps for deans, accreditation teams, and more. Hard data measuring viewpoint diversity and constructive disagreement on campus in specific ways can then be shared with offices of grants and sponsored projects to support faculty and administrators applying for grant applications to improve these values on campus.

Create incentives for faculty to participate in efforts toward institutional data and measurement around intellectual diversity.

A two-culture system can create friction between faculty seeking to teach and write and staff devoted to institutional effectiveness. Yet, the two possess perspectives essential to understanding campus climate. Where faculty sometimes bristle at designing and sharing course material in certain ways, they can be shown how such practices actually support campus change over time. Moreover, faculty can share highly specific perspectives useful when designing data collection and measures, and faculty expertise in research skills can serve as a source of strength in this process. Taking the time to engage with faculty also promotes a culture of dialoguing across difference and can promote successful models for other offices around campus.

Implementation

- Administrators seeking change can start small, with issues and challenges around the classroom and student engagement that faculty are expert at addressing.
- Requests to conform teaching materials can be transparent and messaged as opportunities to help leadership learn more about campus climate with promised steps to act where appropriate.

- Faculty can be invited to discuss and weigh in on effective strategies and the kinds of data they would find useful when working toward more constructive disagreement and intellectual diversity.
- Administrators can endeavor to gather intellectually diverse faculty to discuss improving campus climate, ensuring that a single narrative does not ultimately dominate data design.
- Offices of institutional effectiveness can administer surveys with open-ended questions, allowing faculty to anonymously share thoughts on improving campus climate.
- Promotion and tenure committees can consider faculty collaborations in data collection to improve intellectual diversity as a mode of professional service.



Example for adaptation

A dean can form a “professional learning community” — a small group of faculty meeting regularly to discuss needs, potential data, and potential action around a single issue related to viewpoint diversity (for instance, lack of intellectual diversity in a general education program, or why students so often fail to pass gateway courses). At regular intervals, the community meets with staff in data offices and discusses the interpretation of data as part of their learning community. This rhythm allows faculty to engage in deep discussions about their practices, practice their expertise, and shape the same data collection and measurement designs they might participate in.

Ensure the data-collection design process remains open to a range of questions.

Data collection can often resort to questions seeking information about demographics and preferred identity, especially when the perceived problem is equity, systemic racism, and so forth. But these assumptions regarding the root causes of institutional challenges undergird a particular perspective, thus narrowing the solutions that can be proposed. Ensuring that data designs emerge from robust dialogue on a team made up of stakeholders with different experiences and points of view regarding the campus environment can help paint a broader picture of institutional challenges, which will likely lead to a better understanding of appropriate and effective solutions.

Implementation

- Offices of institutional effectiveness/research can dialogue regularly with a range of faculty about perceived institutional challenges and inefficiencies to expose data designs to various perspectives and experiences.
- Provosts can challenge these offices to reflect regularly on their goals for data designs, identify assumptions, and ensure those goals align with a variety of intellectual purposes.
- The institutional effectiveness officer or related role can call for staff and instructional designers to consider a range of models for study designs and data collection, as many models run under silent assumptions about systemic issues.
- When considering new technology services, senior officers can ask how new technology can provide actionable data and focus on the strategic deployment to ensure staff are trained to use tools toward their intended purpose.
- Offices can include an intentional process of brainstorming alternative explanations of observed data patterns, recognizing how diverse university stakeholders may participate in campus life and perceive their own roles and needs.



Example for adaptation

A college faces attrition from Hispanic female students and lays blame at the feet of systemic racism and white-driven inequity. An open process for considering what questions to ask or examining alternative explanations of cause when investigating the attrition leads to the finding that most of the college's students commute and that not enough parking or childcare supports mothers engaging in class. Ideologies around systemic racism are tamped down before causing harm, allowing for logistical focus around solving the actual problem, which ultimately benefits the entire community. Data around retention and causes for attrition is further refined and connected with internal processes.

Hire an institutional effectiveness officer and team committed to intellectual diversity.

Senior administrators responsible for institutional data design and collection — sometimes called institutional effectiveness officers or vice provosts for institutional effectiveness — have tremendous influence over conversations around strategic vision, campus goals, and new initiatives. These positions have grown more common in the last decade and, with their teams, impact what data is collected and measured on campus.

But they are often not situated to straddle an institution's academic and administrative sides. Moreover, these offices often contain a single individual, who can be overloaded with data design and reporting. Ensuring people who are properly supported and committed to intellectual diversity fill these roles can enrich data designs upstream and ensure that intellectual diversity informs what data is collected and acted upon.

Implementation

- Hiring committees should seek a senior individual able to speak across academic and administrative needs, familiar with both research/data designs and the organizational needs of an academic unit.
- Successful candidates should express an interest in intellectual diversity, a willingness to engage across lines of difference, and skills in constructive disagreement.
- These roles should regularly attend faculty meetings and other academic conversations on campus to track how issues are discussed and collect a sense for local cultural challenges.
- Similarly, these roles should be expected to articulate a clear vision for effectiveness that recognizes multiple stakeholders and perspectives, while proposing effective measures and strategies that yield accessible, actionable data.
- Provosts can ensure the relevant office has autonomy (similar to academic freedom) to share uncomfortable findings and disconfirm general campus assumptions as data is returned.
- Provosts can also ensure these offices are properly resourced with the budgets, tools, and professional development necessary to develop and reflect on their praxis.
- As appropriate for an institution's finances and goals, leadership can consider expanding these offices to provide more supports, intellectual diversity, and opportunities to engage and collect data across campus spaces.

Ensure measurements focus on universal qualities of learning and development.

Evidence in educational and psychological literature increasingly underscores universal principles supporting human learning, including engaged and active practices, freedom for authentic inquiry, and connections between content and learner. Although students may arrive on campus differently equipped for the learning environment, designs recognizing that people learn in similar ways and focusing on engagement metrics can provide hard data about the learning process and suggest action that improves the core classroom aim: to impart knowledge and skills.

Implementation

- Offices associated with data design and institutional measurement can consider this Guide's bibliography and others based in the science of learning to find ideas for effective measures.
- These offices can review existing data designs with an eye toward measurement of learning and engagement in the classroom and in student satisfaction with professional development.
- Staff and administrators can expand existing data designs around retention and belonging to ask about student engagement with material and opportunities to practice skill sets.
- Instructional and data staff can articulate general principles of learning worth measuring for the improvement of campus climate. These principles of actual learning can be developed into conversation and broader measurement designs.
- Provosts and senior administrators can start a broader conversation around how data designs are aligned with university purpose toward greater truth, which in turn promote confidence and equal experiences for all.



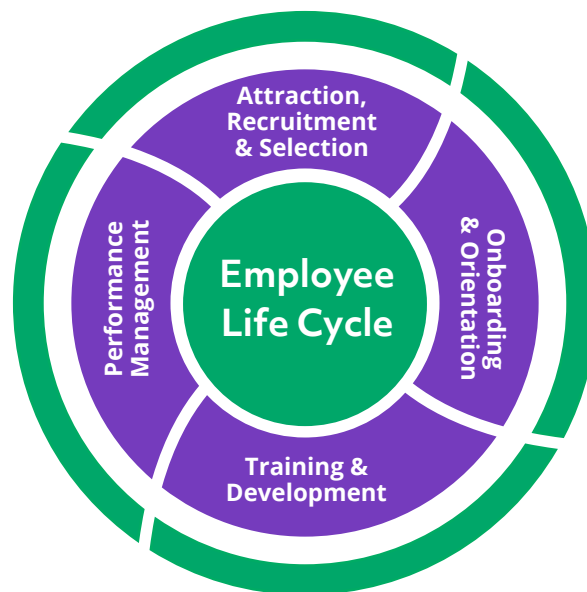
Example for adaptation

Data designed to measure new student advancement in mathematics knowledge indicates that while programs that are focused solely on a sense of student belonging on campus improve student satisfaction a little, programs that combine such approaches with academic support around mathematics vastly improve student satisfaction and commitment. Only data collection around the actual academic practices could have underscored the need to infuse belonging programs with the academic rigor students seek.

Employee Practice

A culture that embraces open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement is more readily realized when these principles are visibly seen and experienced in the expectations and practices of the employee life cycle (the different phases a worker advances through in an organization, or as SpriggHR refers to it, the employee’s “journey” with a company).⁷ As Figure 1 illustrates, harnessing the employee life cycle can help institutions attract missionally aligned candidates and reinforce institutional values over time. It can also help employees and leaders reflect on alignment with core institutional values when making decisions for compensation, tenure, staffing, succession, and more.

Figure 1: The Employee Life Cycle by Sharon Floyd



Position your institution as an employer-of-choice through employment branding.

Employment branding is the process of positioning the organization as an employer-of-choice for candidates possessing certain values and attitudes. With the guiding principles of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement clearly communicated on the institution’s website and career pages, as well as within the job description and requirements section of job postings, an institution can signal that it seeks candidates committed to certain ways of thinking and interacting.

Implementation

- Human resources departments can create a positive and compelling image of the organization in descriptions, boilerplate language, and interactions with potential job candidates by sharing positive campus stories that relay the institution's guiding principles.
- Similarly, human resources and recruitment can provide a clear message about what it would be like to work for the institution, sharing details about success stories and positive relationships across lines of difference on campus.
- Recruiters, alumni, and current staff can encourage candidates who share the institution's values of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement to apply.
- Human resources and recruitment offices can reinforce a sense of pride in working for an organization that champions institutional values, policies, and practices.
- Institutions can clearly showcase their values on the following platforms: organizational website, internal career site, external career and recruiting websites (e.g., Academic 360, LinkedIn, Chronicle of Higher Education, HigherEdJobs.com, Indeed, etc.), and in job descriptions.

Include more than the traditional gathering of documents in the application process.

Gathering documents — such as curriculum vitae, transcripts, publication information, work product, and so forth — to establish fit for the role is integral to the application process. Conveying up front the values of intellectual diversity and constructive disagreement and asking questions of the applicant to discern whether they cherish similar values can help signal an institution's priorities and bring in candidates likely to support and enrich campus culture.

Implementation

- Human resources, in collaboration with the search committee, can provide language on the job posting or career site that educates the candidate right up front by sharing institutional values and then gathering information from the candidate about values alignment.
- The application process can include a question prompt asking candidates to share how their values align with the values of a university that promotes open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement to ensure the applicants know that these values

are meaningful to the university so that any misalignment with values can be discussed and mutually understood.

- Job descriptions can prompt materials like the cover letter or recommendation letters to speak to a candidate's commitment to these values and willingness to continually grow toward them in support of a truly inclusive campus culture.



Example for adaptation

During the selection process, the search committee can screen first and foremost for minimum qualifications such as teaching, research, administrative experience, etc. Second, they can look at the cultural and values alignment between the candidate and the university, keeping in mind that discriminating against a candidate based solely on their statements around value alignment may be as problematic as discriminating against candidates based on other non-job-specific categories.



Example for adaptation

During the interview, according to Vivian Maza, the interviewing committee might consider asking one or two open-ended questions to determine the candidate's alignment with university values, such as: "Give us one concrete example of how an academic activity aligns with our institutional values to support open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement" or "Share how the experience strengthened you and others personally, and furthered safe and open dialogue within your school or organization."⁸

Make employees aware of company policies and expectations at the start of the relationship between an employee and the employer as part of effective employee orientation.

During day-one orientation, human resources and/or faculty leadership can reiterate the institution's commitment to open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement, along with other

guiding principles. To ensure these values are impressed as authentic, and not boilerplate policies, these orientations can include stories from current employees, students, and alumni about the value of the institution's campus culture.

Implementation

- Human resources staff can reinforce the institution's commitment to provide an educational environment where students, faculty, and administrators can share their intellectual viewpoints without the fear of being ostracized, shamed, or retaliated against.
- In-person or virtual onboarding and orientation practices can include a session or module that champions this effort. Providing time for facilitated discussion around this topic is most effective but is not necessary for fully online environments as long as it is a focus of the orientation process.

Align training and development activities to the institution's mission, vision, and values to ensure the focus is on more than just obtaining knowledge.

Understanding that institutions have differing approaches to training and development efforts, when possible, administrative leadership, faculty personnel committees, and/or human resources can plan frequent opportunities for open dialogue that reiterates the importance of promoting value alignment within the university setting. These opportunities can occur in separate areas like retreats and formal training or as a regular element of team meetings, faculty gatherings, and yearly employee reviews.

Implementation

- Deans and chairs can plan annual faculty retreats with opportunities for group and individual reflection, engagement, and discussion over differing perspectives and exploration of departmental and institutional values.
- Colleges and departments can host town hall meetings with executive administrators from both the faculty and administrative sides (e.g., chancellors, provosts, deans, and directors) to discuss core values and future initiatives to further develop on campus.
- Units can allot time during all-staff meetings for dialogue about working culture and how it may be improved to further support open inquiry and viewpoint diversity.

Allow for periodic consideration of employee job performance against a predetermined set of organizational expectations and individually articulated goals.

Periodic evaluations of employee job performance, in general, and specifically related to commitments to upholding intellectual diversity and dialoguing across difference, can ensure alignment between organizational values and individual employee goals. These moments reinforce the prioritization of these values to an organization and give employees opportunities to reflect on their growth over time and deepen understanding of institutional values.

Implementation

- Administrators can partner with human resource leaders and/or the faculty personnel committee to develop a system of reflection and self-evaluation regarding personal alignment with institutional values (e.g., collegiality, intellectual humility, tolerance toward opposing views, empathy, etc.), with opportunities to interrogate these values.
- Offices can provide opportunities for administrators, faculty, and staff to reflect on their promotion of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement over the previous year and have them include specific examples of how they championed these cultural efforts with colleagues and/or students.

Admissions

Similar to employees, students can be understood as passing through a life cycle in their education from initial contact with an institution through to graduation. Several key moments in the admissions process can ensure that students understand an institution's values and that admissions offices cast a wide net in their recruitment. Avoiding stereotypes and thinking holistically about students can be a critical factor in building a student body committed to intellectual diversity and constructive disagreement.⁹

Consider a broad set of diversity variables when recruiting and considering prospective students.

In admissions, many universities currently prioritize demographic dimensions of diversity (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). Yet what most facilitates personal growth and learning are classrooms and student bodies that reflect a wide range of experiences, beliefs, and viewpoints. Unduly prioritizing demographic diversity can actually reduce personal experience, worldview, and other dimensions of diversity. Admissions offices can instead prioritize personal experiences and intellectual dimensions of diversity, along with demographic dimensions. A diverse array of personal experiences and viewpoints improves thinking, sharpens debate, and fosters innovation; in addition, a broad range of viewpoints on campus can help mitigate long-held prejudices and harmful, growing U.S. polarization, making campus ground zero for renewing trust and democratic practice.

Implementation

- Admissions professionals can host regular team discussions about their working definitions of diversity, what human dimensions they may be missing, and how their practices align with their principles.
- Before selecting variables of diversity that will be prioritized in admissions, staff can enumerate and consider a broad sample of the entire set of variables for which greater diversity could enrich the student body and then winnow based on current goals and student body needs.
- Admissions variables can include demographic markers but should also consider intellectual diversity and related attributes like background and experiences to ensure a diverse student body in intellectual and residential spheres of campus life.

- Senior administrators and faculty can meet with admissions counselors and directors to discuss shared goals for student intellectual experiences on campus, learning from one another's perspectives and experiences.
- Admissions offices should remain wary of overemphasizing certain admissions categories at the expense of other variables related to diversity (e.g., overemphasizing minority race at the expense of rural geographies).



Example for adaptation

Definition of diversity: the degree to which students represent/demonstrate a range of different skills, knowledge, cultures, identities, geographies, experiences, ideologies, philosophies, values, and personalities to provide the greatest opportunity to learn and grow from one another.

Think “slowly” about students.

Many practices used to account for diversity characterize students in one-dimensional terms: race, gender, or sexual orientation. These practices are diversity efforts in their own right, but they fail to acknowledge students' uniqueness as individuals. Borrowing from Daniel Kahneman's book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, a slower, more deliberate approach can instead help assess the full breadth of a student's character.¹⁰ What invisible, hidden, or harder-to-discern qualities also enrich a student body? Intentional discussion can help admissions staff shape new-student cohorts that best satisfy objectives like curiosity, intellectual diversity, intensity, preparedness, talent, work ethic, and more. This deliberate approach can apply to the entire pipeline from outreach to enrollment, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Admissions Life Cycle, created by John Chisholm



Implementation

- Admissions staff can assess their admissions pipeline (see Figure 2) to understand where and why shortfalls are occurring and how to address them. Are outsized diversity variables impacting certain stages? How might outreach identify less visible qualities like experiences and beliefs? Balancing these issues can improve campus viewpoint diversity.
- Admissions staff can work with campus assessment and evaluation offices to conduct interviews or surveys of high school seniors and other prospective students who contact or visit campuses but do not apply (or if admitted, do not enroll), also referred to as “lost customers,” to determine why.
- Campus tour guides can think holistically about diversity variables (i.e., beyond race and gender) when organizing visiting groups and campus tours to emphasize the broad range of student organizations, research projects, and so forth that might be of interest to the visiting group.
- Admissions interviewers can ask students to share how they explore ideas and confront oppositional beliefs, both to learn about them and to signal campus priorities when selecting students.

Be wary of stereotypes throughout the admissions process.

Because admissions is, ultimately, about determining a student’s preparedness and fit for campus, it can be easy, although often unintentional, for rampant shortcuts and categorization to creep in when evaluating many students at once. The more vigilant admissions staff are in their approaches to individual students, the more likely they are to evaluate each student across equal and broad merits. Throughout the pipeline, and even in messaging after admitting students, counselors and staff can engage with students as complex individuals rather than labeling based on group identity.

Implementation

- Admissions staff can ask students what kinds of support and communities they seek rather than assuming the types of support and communities they might be interested in based on group identity, such as cultural houses and first-gen programs.
- Ensure that financial aid marketing efforts approach students as multifaceted individuals and do not make stereotypical assumptions about likely monetary needs.

- Showcase diversity on campus beyond race and gender, including religious, geographic, and intellectual.
- Resist the temptation to compromise academic standards to admit certain candidates. Instead, consider both achievement (where candidates stand at the time of applying) and distance advanced (how far they have progressed by their own initiative from where they began) in evaluating all candidates, either of which could better predict an individual's future performance and success.
- Showcase a range of intellectual interests, beliefs, career paths, and viewpoints that students are welcome to explore on campus when inviting alumni to speak to prospective students.



Example for adaptation

Admissions offices often give credit for distance advanced to urban racial minorities (how far they have progressed academically from where they began); they can do the same for rural, low-income students who may have also faced obstacles but advanced a similar distance from where they started on their own initiative.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Campus Expression

Free expression, diversity, equity, and inclusion have often been put forth as core values in academia. To succeed, these values must welcome an array of human differences, including, but not limited to, diversity of identity, experiences, and thought. Yet the compatibility of free expression with diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives has been called into question due to tension on college campuses over controversial speakers, hate-related speech, and campus protest. Effectively holding these values in balance requires an infrastructure of institutional values and principles; leadership from top levels of the administration; time and resources invested in faculty, professional, and student development; committed campus spaces to model civil discourse; and an overall strategy to found inclusive academic communities on free expression and civil discourse.

Turn to institutional values to set expectations regarding free expression and diversity, equity, and inclusion for the campus community.

Higher education institutions can use values to establish behavioral expectations for campuses. Institutional values and principles guide organizations, create aspiration toward the highest human and organizational ideals, and shape the behavior of students, faculty, and staff. From peer-to-peer interactions to clubs and classrooms, articulated values can offer campus a sense of shared principles that informs daily and years-long goals.

Implementation

- Administrators can adopt statements of institutional values and commitments to provide the necessary guideposts indicating agreement with principles that community members will adhere to as they live, work, and learn together in a diverse and inclusive environment.
- Senior administrators and supervisors can articulate expectations routinely through public addresses, newsletters, and in their own actions, while acknowledging the connectedness of these values with the things that matter most to the institution.

Develop and engage strategies that institutionalize free expression and diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental to the academic experience for every member of the academic community.

As students enter campuses for the first time and as faculty and staff are onboarded, each individual can come to understand colleges and universities as spaces where open inquiry, dialogue across difference, and diversity, equity, and inclusion are core to the institutional mission and embedded in the culture. By institutionalizing inclusive approaches to free expression and constructive disagreement as enduring elements of modern academic institutions, colleges and universities ensure that all segments of the campus community can participate in, effectively experience, and benefit from them within the academic environment.

Implementation

- Administrators can establish guidelines for engagement that are enshrined in institutional values, enlivened in everyday practice by operating principles, and embodied within members of the campus community.
- Administrators, in partnership with human resources, can provide professional development opportunities that further sustain these practices over time by showcasing leadership's firm commitment to open inquiry, dialogue across difference, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Senior administrators can host regular town halls and forums to reinforce the exciting benefits of these values, discuss campus culture, and address challenges within the campus community.

Support the use of campus spaces to demonstrate constructive disagreement.

Designating campus time and/or space to routinize the practice of dialogue across difference can energize campus members to participate. Whether an exemplar classroom experience or faculty and professional development sessions, illuminate areas that are advancing free expression and constructive disagreement in ways that strengthen campus culture.

Implementation

- Administrators can leverage and highlight campus spaces for modeling approaches and practicing skills in open inquiry and constructive disagreement by hosting their own debates and events, providing budgets for public events that reinforce institutional values, and dedicating certain spaces on campus to such events.
- Administrators can encourage faculty and departments to offer spaces, such as teaching and learning centers, inclusion and diversity offices, and human resource units, that promote intellectual diversity and inclusion in their visions and auspices.

Develop relationships and opportunities with a variety of community partners.

A college or university's partnerships and local opportunities often say much about its priorities and values. Whether on the departmental or institutional level, units can strive to ensure that they collaborate across the local and national ideological spectrum, both as a reflection of intellectual diversity and as a way to ensure their diverse faculty and student populations find welcome learning opportunities. This approach also helps institutions practice neighborliness as broadly as possible and avoid the stigma of political bias or secret agendas.

Implementation

- Directors of offices of community affairs (also called community partnership, relations, or engagement) can regularly audit the institution's existing collaborations with an eye toward gaps and blind spots that could better serve campus if remedied.
- The same office can request information from departments about their local connections and arrangements for students in order to paint the broadest picture of the institution's community engagement.
- Departments can survey faculty and students for anonymous responses about the kinds of opportunities and field learning they seek, and build out effective local relationships across the ideological spectrum.
- Presidents, provosts, and deans can seek local representatives across the ideological spectrum doing interesting work to speak at career fairs or on panels for students.

- On their university website, institutions can share a philosophy of partnerships that underscores viewpoint diversity and constructive disagreement.
- In public addresses and writing, presidents can stress the value of neighborliness and diverse learning opportunities, reminding the institution's various stakeholders that diverse collaborations enrich campus for all.



Example for adaptation

Community engagement philosophy: As an institution devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and solutions to the world's weightiest problems, we seek to expose students to the broadest range of possible practices and beliefs before graduation. This philosophy leads us to partner proudly and widely with local and national organizations that both reflect our campus diversity and invite students into collaborations across lines of difference. By witnessing an array of approaches and postures toward society and ideas, students sharpen their own knowledge while learning to engage across political and ideological spectrums before entering the workforce.

Practices for **Student Affairs**

Introduction

Students often view their learning environment as one that includes but extends beyond the classroom. Colleges and universities can seek to reinforce the guiding principles of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement by enriching the spaces between classes like extracurricular activities and support services. When students feel encouraged to be bold and intellectually curious with one another in places like group meetings and student government, it gives them opportunities to practice these values in applied settings. It also reinforces their classroom demeanor and further deepens the ways they dialogue across difference. In order to adopt these practices, institutions can ensure student support organizations receive ample funding, include intellectual diversity in their hiring, and respond to positive challenges posed by both students and senior leadership.

In this section readers will find recommendations for imbuing our guiding principles into the culture and operation of student groups, student government, student support, and campus environment. Readers who will find this section helpful include student group leaders, student government officers, instructors, faculty advisors, senior administrators, and student support professionals.

Campus Environment

Higher education has an opportunity to model and intentionally curate opportunities for dialogue across difference among its student population. Colleges and universities, perhaps more than any other kind of organization, are well-suited to serve as forums for open and respectful discussion and dialogue around complex and even controversial issues. They are the quintessential learning community for students to join and experience intellectual and personal growth. Higher education institutions represent places where respect for the opinions of others, even when there is strong disagreement, is modeled. As such, constructive engagement among students is a bedrock principle for every college campus, and the campus environment can be shaped to practice such constructive disagreement.

Develop interdisciplinary courses designed to explore contemporary issues.

Before walking onto a college campus, many students have not been given the opportunity to express themselves and freely debate and dialogue the issues of the day without fear of consequence.

Coursework can create equitable opportunities for such inquiry and exchange and provide the space for all students to connect to the coursework and have vulnerable and honest conversations about issues that matter to them.

Implementation

- Faculty can consider equity in course content by making appropriate course materials culturally relevant and connected with a variety of challenges and factors faced by students today without forcing connections where they are not readily available.
- Administrators may consider using open source materials that are vetted, timely, rigorous, relevant, and engaging, thereby allowing faculty to respond to external contexts and enhance the learning environment on an ongoing basis when publisher schedules, firewalls, or ideologies prove challenging.



Example for adaptation

Benedict College has offered a team-taught course titled Race, Crime, and Hate: From Emmett Till to Black Lives Matter. By utilizing a multidisciplinary approach and rotating the subject matter taught, the instructors provide an opportunity for students to engage in critical analysis of current events. The course, offered for three semesters, has addressed the following topics: criminal justice reform (in response to the First Step Act), medical ethics (in response to COVID-19), media images of people of color, and voter rights, suppression, and agency. The course content is routinely adapted to address the critical issues of the day, thereby affording students the opportunity to engage diverse viewpoints in meaningful ways relevant to their lives.

Explore, practice, and apply intentional empathy when working with campus constituents to build trust and model meaningful engagement and problem-solving for students.

Administrators, faculty, and staff, especially those who work with vulnerable populations, can undergo training to understand and embrace the art of empathy — the ability to imagine oneself in someone else’s shoes and to experience the world from that person’s perspective. Both empathy and perspective-taking are necessary precursors to understanding and creating fertile ground for trust and open inquiry among the campus community. Once administrators, faculty, and staff refine and practice these approaches, they can model them for students.

Implementation

- Administrators can develop a menu of training opportunities to inculcate in staff intentional empathy in times of crisis, such as faculty in-service opportunities, mindfulness training, and staff development opportunities devoted to helping students practice these same skills in the classroom and residence halls.
- Administrators and faculty can curate campus events designed for administrators, faculty, and staff to practice empathy alongside students, such as events that host speakers with divergent views.



Example for adaptation

Campus Environment Case Study: Benedict College

In recent years, Benedict College, a small, private historically black college (HBCU) located in the battleground state of South Carolina, has found itself squarely in the eye of the anti-civility storm. As the Trump administration, and Republicans more broadly, sought opportunities for engagement in minority communities, HBCUs emerged as an obvious constituency. However, the juxtaposition of President Trump's affinity for HBCUs and his broader social policies, which were often viewed as "anti-minority," struck a nerve in most minority communities. Accordingly, when his administration announced that the president would attend a bipartisan forum on the issue of criminal justice reform on the campus of Benedict College, the reaction was swift and vitriolic: "How could an HBCU allow Donald Trump to visit their campus? Didn't the college and college president have the courage to simply say 'no?'"

These questions and many more were hurled at Benedict College and, more specifically, the president of the college. For Benedict president Roslyn Clark Artis, the answer was simple: "How could we not allow President Trump to visit our campus?" For President Artis, college campuses provide a space for students to be exposed to varying ideas and viewpoints, where campus constituencies can be afforded the intellectual spaces to hear and be encouraged to listen to views that are inconsistent with their own. This is not a futile exercise because there is tremendous value to be gained from exposure to divergent viewpoints.

According to President Artis, there are three primary reasons to allow a controversial public figure such as Donald Trump to speak on campuses. First, college campuses offer opportunities for students to develop the emotional intelligence required to hear, process, and critically evaluate multiple perspectives, which leads to increased self-regulation and the ability to manage one's emotions and behavior.

Second, to reject an invitation from a controversial figure like President Trump to speak on campus, thereby limiting exposure to potentially divergent views, suggests a lack of confidence in students and their abilities to exercise critical thinking and high self-agency.



Example continued

When presented with varying viewpoints, students can and will sort through those views to question, challenge, debate, and engage with them.

Finally, in an environment characterized by deplatforming, or cancel culture, where an individual's views are disregarded or ignored, higher education has an obligation to prepare students, and to some extent other primary constituents, such as staff, faculty, and alumni, to effectively process information, probe deeply, acknowledge limitations in one's own perspective, and engage in meaningful ways. Civility cannot be mandated, rather taught using methods that blend mindfulness, core values, dialogue, and emotional intelligence.

Student Practice

Many of today's students believe free inquiry benefits only their ideological opponents. A recent report from EAB noted that 26% of students indicated they have protested for issues of diversity and inclusion, whereas over 12% protested for freedom of speech.¹¹ A Gallup/Knight Foundation Survey showed greater student belief in a diverse and inclusive society than in protected free-speech rights (53% to 46%).¹² For student affairs professionals advocating for open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement, this landscape presents a challenge and an opportunity to help students understand how freedom of expression and inclusion are overlapping values. Student affairs professionals can help students grasp the important role of freedom of expression on college campuses and encourage them to effectively take part in interpersonal dialogue, campuswide events, and the broader campus expression debate.

Help students understand the unique role of universities in America.

The term “freedom of expression,” rather than “freedom of speech,” is more apt to help students understand the unique role of universities in our society — one of those roles being to serve as a marketplace of ideas. Freedom of speech is a constitutional right intended to protect someone from punishment by the government for what they say; on the other hand, freedom of expression, when considering the principle of open inquiry, is an academic value that advances student learning and the mission of the university. Making this distinction will aid students in better understanding the important role of open inquiry on college campuses.

Implementation

- Administrators and orientation leaders can introduce students to the AAUP's 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure.¹³ In other words, campus leaders can educate students on the concepts of academic freedom, tenure, and the unique role of university faculty members.
- Administrators and orientation leaders can make students aware of prominent Supreme Court decisions, such as *Sweezy v. New Hampshire* (1957), *Healy v. James* (1972), and *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia* (1995). These cases underscore the courts' belief that our democracy relies on universities providing a marketplace of ideas.

- Administrators and orientation leaders can emphasize why freedom of expression is vital to maximizing student learning, even when that expression can be viewed as offensive.
- When a faculty member or student makes an offensive public comment, students might say, “Why do you let them say that? It is not consistent with our university values.” In these situations, student affairs professionals can explain that the role of the university is to provide a wide spectrum of perspectives for students to consider. They can explain that the university cannot realistically support all perspectives; therefore, it is understood that individual faculty and students — although members of the campus community — speak only for themselves, not for the entire university or their fellow faculty or students.
- Academic affairs professionals can make clear that not all students prefer to avoid offensive ideas or expression — some prefer to hear them out in the open so that they can confront them, refine their own thoughts and ideas, or change their mind, if warranted — and that simply listening to others’ perspectives does not constitute agreement.

Educate students on expression policies.

Students often misunderstand that hate speech and free speech are not one and the same. They may not easily understand that there are not legal or policy limits on bigoted, hateful, and racist expression and may need guidance to fully grasp their expression rights and the rights of others speaking on campus. As such, students could benefit from understanding that there is a line on free expression, even if that line is not drawn where they would prefer.

Implementation

- Administrators and advisors can provide specific information on what expression on campus is, in fact, prohibited. For example, universities may explicitly state that they do not tolerate threats of harm, harassment, or sexual harassment or the disruption of others’ rights. But students may need to be made aware that, from a policy standpoint, harsh public criticism does not constitute harassment or a threat of physical harm, and a controversial protest does not necessarily disrupt university business or students’ access to their education.
- Student affairs administrators and staff can involve faculty members to help share this message because students tend to have a stronger relationship with, and therefore more trust in, faculty than administrators. Plus, faculty involvement might help dilute the perception that these educational efforts are being offered only to serve the needs of the administration.

Be mindful of students' developmental needs.

Student advocacy is common among some student populations. While student affairs professionals may certainly take students' advocacy seriously, they can also maintain focus on students' cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Implementation

- Advisors can use tools and resources made available by offices of diversity, accessibility, and mental health to address student development challenges.
- Advisors, alongside campus mental health professionals, can provide opportunities for students to enhance their ability to manage their feelings and emotions.
- Advisors can challenge students to seek and consider new information to make sense of the complexity of the issues surrounding them rather than simply holding on to existing ideas and beliefs.

Acknowledge the harm students experience.

The freedom of expression that student affairs professionals value on campus may also make some students vulnerable to offensive expression, especially students from historically marginalized groups. Offensive, race-based incidents can create particularly stressful developmental conflicts for students. For instance, a Gallup/Knight Foundation Survey found that 45% of Black students have felt uncomfortable because of some comment about their ethnicity, compared with only 21% of their white peers.¹⁴ Student affairs professionals can acknowledge this harm while protecting free expression on campus.

Implementation

- When students want to see peers who engage in hateful speech be disciplined, including with suspension or expulsion, advisors can explain to them why this might not be possible and respond to their anger or hurt feelings by sharing relevant information about campus services.
- Advisors, alongside campus mental help services, can prioritize providing care and support for students who are experiencing distress as a result of incidents on campus or in the larger community.

Empower students to act where they can.

Whenever possible, student affairs professionals can involve students in deliberation on campus expression issues and encourage them to advocate for issues about which they are passionate. Incidents of speaker cancellations often occur swiftly and before university personnel have a moment to engage with students and turn the issue into a teachable moment. Treating students as moral beings and developing minds can preempt potential friction and turn challenges into opportunities for growth.

Implementation

- Administrators, faculty, and staff can create forums for students to ask questions and express their concerns about speakers invited to campus.
- Administrators can ask for student perspectives on where they believe the expression lines should be drawn on issues like threats and harassment. Notably, policies cannot be set solely based on student opinion, but such discussions will provide students with more insight into the nuances and challenges of campus expression policies.
- Advisors and faculty can empower students by encouraging them to use their voices to advance efforts and causes they care about rather than delegating their voices to university administrators by pressuring them to issue public statements in the wake of campus expression incidents.



Example for adaptation

Chapman University created a campus expression task force of students to recommend a range of institutional responses to racist and other offensive actions and expression. The task force discussed and debated what expression should be subject to potential disciplinary action, and they explored how academic institutions can respond effectively to offensive expression in nonpunitive ways, such as sponsoring educational programs and offering support services to those affected.

Focus on engaging students inclined to be open to new perspectives.

There is ample evidence that the majority of students believe that protecting free speech rights is extremely important to democracy — 70% prefer campuses to be open learning environments that allow for a wide range of views to be heard.¹⁵ Conversely, only 28% of students favor disinviting speakers because of student opposition, and just as many students are likely to oppose speech codes as to support them. Student affairs professionals can focus on steering students who are interested in learning more about and affecting university decision-making toward productive paths.

Implementation

- Administrators can work with faculty to seek out open-minded students who support free expression on campus for key leadership and employment positions.
- Advisors can direct students interested in campus improvement toward relevant student programs and cocurricular activities and leadership positions.

Facilitate intentional opportunities for dialogue.

Much of student-to-student discussion of social and political issues takes place on social media rather than public areas of campus, where students can express their beliefs without having to engage in real-time interpersonal interaction. One of the most effective ways to help students value free expression and viewpoint diversity is to relocate challenging discussions away from social media and onto campus.

Implementation

- Advisors can make students aware of in-person opportunities for dialogue being held on campus or in the wider community.
- Faculty and staff can work with campus leaders who manage campus events or run student groups to host opportunities for students to enhance their learning and growth by experiencing interpersonal interactions with others who hold a diverse range of perspectives.

Student Groups

Student groups, such as clubs and cocurricular programs, can help students feel more connected to their campus community, develop interpersonal relationships and valuable skills, and make a positive impact on campus life. They can also help students feel more comfortable engaging with new perspectives and those with which they disagree. Faculty and staff can act as leaders of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement on their campus by forming or managing student groups aimed at offering opportunities to hear diverse perspectives and increase dialogue across difference and debate. While formalized learning outcomes are threaded throughout the curriculum, a culture of inquiry can include meaningful opportunities for student learning and growth outside the classroom.

Create opportunities for 21st-century skill development through extracurricular and cocurricular programming.

Interpersonal skills, ethics, analytical skills, problem-solving, and communication are commonly associated with a college education. They are among the most in-demand skills for employers and integral to participation in a democratic society. By forming extracurricular and cocurricular groups, faculty and staff are helping to manifest college and university commitments to the free exchange of diverse views and ideas and development of skills useful for students' lives.

Implementation

- Form student groups by researching the process for starting a club or program at the university or college and considering what opportunities for student growth are not currently represented in existing student groups.
- Identify students who are committed to being leaders in efforts to deepen practices of free exchange on campus.
- Find supportive allies within the department who have experience overseeing clubs and/or cocurriculars.
- Secure funding from available sources, such as the division's and/or department's budget, college or university funds available for clubs and cocurriculars, college or university foundations, etc., that will not place ideological limitations on the group's practices and hiring.

- Develop a mission statement and measurable objectives for the club or program that include commitments to democratic values.
- Develop a recruitment strategy for students, such as identifying talented and responsible students for leadership positions. Faculty and staff can proactively recruit students who will contribute to creating a supportive and constructive climate that encourages viewpoint diversity.

Manage a student club or cocurricular program.

Whether faculty, staff, or students are responsible for forming a student club or cocurricular program, faculty and staff play an integral role in managing these clubs and programs. As program advisors, they can provide guidance, support, and continuity to student groups, which move them toward intellectual diversity and dialoguing across difference, as these practices further empower or enrich the group's goals.

Implementation

- Schedule weekly meetings with advisors and student leaders for planning activities and reflecting on the group's ongoing culture and potential challenges.
- Work with students of the group to create a Slack or Discord channel for communication as well as a Google Drive folder for sharing documents, slides, and spreadsheets.
- Create a transparent decision-making process for selecting topics, activities, and events by following the college's or university's mission statement.
- Model the desired attitudes and behavior expected of students — an advisor's actions can build or diminish support for the club or program.



Example for adaptation

Campus environment case study: Linn Benton Community College Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) in Oregon, a Heterodox Academy Open Inquiry Award winner, has been an example of how student clubs and cocurricular programs can introduce opportunities to hear different viewpoints and see constructive disagreement modeled on campus. LBCC's



Example continued

Civil Discourse Program’s mission is to “promote dialogue that enhances understanding among individuals with diverse viewpoints in an open and respectful environment.”

The program became the first community college chapter of BridgeUSA, a student-led organization “leading the fight against polarization and apathy” among high school and college students across the country.

Consider partnering with external organizations such as Braver Angels, which host debates that aim to facilitate honest and authentic dialogue; Free Intelligent Conversation, which provides a simple and effective activity for stimulating thoughtful dialogue; and the Village Square’s Respect + Rebellion series, which offers a number of ideologically diverse speaking pairs who model what open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement look like in practice.

Erect civil discourse boards, which invite all students on campus to respond to a question or topic being debated on campus or in public discourse, such as “Do you think the electoral college should be abolished?” at a time that best suits them. To get the most out of a civil discourse board, LBCC recommends identifying the optimal location for such a whiteboard; displaying a sign next to the board with rules and etiquette, consequences for violations of rules and etiquette, the mission statement of the group that erected the board, and information regarding how to contact the group; assigning a student group member to monitor the board; and settling on questions/prompts during student group meetings.

Provide opportunities for students to write point/counterpoint op-eds, which help them learn how to write collaboratively, seek “both sides” of an issue, and develop the capacity to construct steel man arguments. And, by getting articles published in the student newspaper, this activity provides the campus community with divergent perspectives on controversial topics.

Offer book clubs with carefully curated reading materials that present diverse themes, antagonists, protagonists, and literary contexts. These clubs provide fertile opportunities for open exchange between and among staff, faculty, and students, without fear of negative



Example continued

responses to opinions and beliefs or other adverse consequences, such as grading and employment consequences. Furthermore, book clubs provide a structure for exploring ideas collaboratively, thereby increasing the likelihood of meaningful contribution by all participants. Some colleges and universities have introduced campus book clubs and can serve as a model for other campuses: Benedict College offers the Presidents BESTie Book Club, Vanderbilt University offers the Chancellor's Book Club, and Spelman College offers the President's Book Circle.

Establish debate clubs, spoken word, and/or visual arts opportunities to foster students' ability to critically evaluate and potentially advocate for a particular position, belief, or policy. In the context of spoken word, opportunities abound for students to give voice to their innermost thoughts, ideas, and feelings without judgment or grade implications.

Offer community forums, which allow for the exploration and deeper understanding of complex issues and provide opportunities for students to practice data analysis and independent validation.

Student Government

Student unions are increasingly becoming places where inquiry is closed off, intellectual orthodoxy is promoted, and disagreement is prohibited. In these spaces, students are discouraged from making public use of their reasoning for fear of losing their jobs and harming their reputations. Student leaders can help overcome these barriers by providing spaces open to inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement. When facing hostility, student leaders can gain the support and trust of the student body as an essential first step to promoting these values, gain influence on the board, and fill as many positions as possible with people who share similar values. Doing this will provide student leaders with the protection necessary to allow them to speak freely, challenge orthodoxy, and make the changes necessary to allow for an open and inclusive campus culture. Oftentimes a large portion of the student body is disengaged with politics, but by providing a useful service, these students can be engaged and encouraged to participate.

Increase student engagement with the student union.

Increasing engagement with the student union is tantamount to shining a light on the affairs of the union and is integral to promoting the heterodox values that democratic processes rely on. The student government is essential for ensuring the student union makes the best and most representative decisions, and they play an important role in increasing viewpoint diversity on the board. Student leaders are central advocates for increasing student involvement and awareness about the student union and leadership opportunities.

Implementation

- Student leaders can start a student engagement campaign by setting up a weekly table promoting the student union and by conducting classroom presentations about what services and supports the student union provides and why it is important for students to get involved.
- They can also share important information like events, service updates, jobs, volunteer opportunities, and other information related to the student experience via social media.
- Student leaders can create a Calendly account for students to book Zoom meetings to connect with other students.

Increase student participation in student governance.

Student leaders may enjoy more success, especially in more hostile and restrictive environments, if they show what the application of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement can do instead of advocating for these values in the abstract. To foster greater viewpoint diversity within the student governance structure, student leaders can encourage students who value viewpoint diversity to run in elections and fill board positions. Often, the subsets of the student body who are the most receptive to participating in student governance are students who are already members of groups, because they are more likely to participate in other extracurricular activities, and international students, who are looking for community in their new environment and/or come from countries where there is more participation in student governance.

Implementation

- Student leaders can create an All Clubs Executive (ACE) board. Such a board consists of the executives of all student groups who meet regularly to increase collaboration between student groups and the student union. The meetings provide an avenue to network with other student group members, whom student leaders can encourage to get involved in student governance, and are a great way to find solutions to problems and identify collaborative work.
- Student leaders can create a student group for international students, with positions for executives and country representatives. Having country representatives whom international students from different countries can relate to will allow student leaders to reach and engage with every subset of the international student community. Having country representatives can help bridge the cultural and linguistic gap that may be present when engaging with people from a diverse array of countries and cultures.

Work with alumni affairs to connect students with alumni who can serve as mentors for practicing heterodox values.

Student governments are often in unique positions to engage with alumni, particularly alumni of student government. Alumni affairs can match current students with alumni mentors who share their heterodox values and can assist them in finding employment in places that also share these values. Finding distinguished alumni who are also willing to speak authoritatively about the need for heterodox values could prove to be an effective and low-risk way to start a conversation among students. Students

and faculty are often hesitant to speak on this topic as their social lives and jobs could be put at risk by advocating for heterodox values. Having alumni speak about their experiences and reiterate the need for heterodox values can be an easier and lower-risk way to get the conversation started.

Implementation

- Student leaders and alumni affairs can create a partnership among alumni, career services, and the student union to help students find jobs that value heterodox perspectives after they graduate.
- Student leaders can encourage career services to conduct surveys and keep statistics on where graduates go to find jobs. Alumni affairs can help with alumni outreach and participation in this program, while the student union can help share the information with students.
- Student leaders and alumni affairs can institute a speaker series by finding and encouraging alumni who are proponents of heterodox values to speak about them.
- Student leaders and alumni affairs can institute a mentorship program by helping find mentors, while the student union can help promote the program within the university and find students interested in being mentees.
- Student leadership and alumni affairs can plan events to keep alumni engaged through biweekly or monthly “alumni connect nights” with speakers, food, and refreshments where students can network with alumni.

Create a volunteering program with a cocurricular credit.

Volunteering is popular among university students and young adults in general. It exposes students to a variety of real-world experiences and can challenge rigid ideologies about how the world works. Engaging in volunteering is also a great way for university students to gain skills and experience in preparation for entering the job market and improving their community. Student governments can work to create a volunteering program with a cocurricular credit, which can be displayed on their student record. Such a program would help students gain skills and experience, and it helps garner engagement with the student union and a student body that can help in various events and services around campus — offering a cocurricular credit incentivizes students to participate, while having a centralized volunteering program makes volunteering opportunities easier to find and more accessible.

Implementation

- Student leaders can speak with the administration about creating a volunteering program with a cocurricular credit. Gaining the support of faculty and administration from the outset is essential for establishing a cocurricular credit for the program and finding volunteering opportunities on campus outside of the student union.
- After gaining the support of administration, student leaders can work cooperatively to find volunteering opportunities on campus, with community organizations that represent an ideological spread, and in the student union.
- Student leaders can create a web page that allows students to sign up for such a program and find volunteering opportunities.
- After the volunteering program is launched, student leaders can run an engagement and promotion campaign through the student union to find interested students and underscore the program's value for experiencing a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

Practices for **Academic Affairs**

Introduction

For a college's or university's intellectual climate to thrive, open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement must first be deeply rooted in the central places and practices where knowledge and truth are pursued. These include scholarly inquiry, classrooms, and related spaces like libraries and university centers, where the core work of intellectual inquiry happens. Ensuring that the primary places dedicated to learning and inquiry support intellectual diversity will create a foundation for a vibrant, truth-seeking campus culture. The habits reinforced in these spaces will in turn spread to the rest of campus, enriching student conversation on the quad, faculty dialogue in department hallways, and senior administrative policies that seek to reward healthy intellectual behavior.

In this section readers will find recommendations for imbuing our guiding principles into classrooms and teaching, scholarly writing and research, intellectual professional development, and corollary learning spaces like libraries and teaching centers. Readers who will find this section helpful include faculty, graduate student instructors, administrators with teaching appointments, deans and department chairs, course coordinators, librarians, teaching center staff, and similar professional appointments.

Intellectual Life

The knowledge that faculty produce is a hallmark of intellectual life, and recognizing blind spots or missing knowledge in a discipline, and then conducting research to fill that hole, are key elements of intellectual life in academia. A scholar's personal writing habits can illuminate orthodoxies in a discipline and counter them with rigorous heterodox perspectives, and having a wide representation of viewpoints and opportunities to share such views is integral to filling disciplinary gaps in knowledge.

Identify blind spots in a discipline and address them.

One way to effectively identify and address disciplinary blind spots is by offering the most charitable critique of the scholarship one wishes to challenge. Doing so builds relationships rather than burning bridges and makes one's arguments naturally more acceptable.

Although scholars pointing out a blind spot in a discipline should expect pushback and learn how to cope with it, by approaching the critique charitably they might also receive praise and opportunities for further discussion or even collaboration across lines of difference.

Implementation

- Scholars can start by steelmanning the discipline they are implicitly criticizing (presenting the strongest version of an argument before criticizing that argument, as opposed to strawmanning, or criticizing the weakest form of an argument). This approach ensures that a critique is actually correct, makes the argument more convincing to both insiders and neutral readers, and disarms/makes transparent bad-faith attempts to sideline the critique.
- Scholars can anticipate pushback from senior members of the discipline by thinking through all counterpoints to, and explanations for, the blind spot identified.
- Scholars can capitalize on praise and opportunities that may arise from addressing a disciplinary blind spot by further engaging those who offer praise and using the publicity to suggest further avenues of research and collaboration.



Example for adaptation

Behavioral economics, which arose as a critique of the economics profession that assumes that humans are always rational decision-makers, began as a fringe subdiscipline, but now two of its founders, Daniel Kahneman and Richard Thaler, have won Nobel Prizes in economics.¹⁶ More recently, critiques of political bias in academia have emerged in books, popular podcasts, new think tanks, and/or lucrative speaking tours.¹⁷

The positive and negative aspects of the experience of critiquing a blind spot in a discipline are closely related to each other. The existence of the blind spot creates an opportunity and demand for a critique; the fear of pushback from disciplinary gatekeepers restricts the supply. Low supply and high demand create a high, rewarding price for critics of the blind spot that are effective. The Nobel laureate physicist Steven Weinberg emphasized this point in a 2003 advice column for young scientists, saying: “While you are swimming and not sinking you should aim for rough water.”¹⁸

Ensure there is a diverse range of rigorously practiced views when curating research teams, journal issues, conferences, and so forth.

Viewpoint diversity is essential to a rigorous academic environment. But curating disciplinary teams, conferences, literature reviews, journal issues, etc. to have diverse viewpoints also requires applying a filter of rigor to all viewpoints. Furthermore, viewpoint diversity begets viewpoint diversity, and it is much easier to curate a conference with viewpoint diversity when designed by a team that itself has viewpoint diversity. However, even the most fair-minded, viewpoint-diversity-valuing curator will have blind spots; the team can establish guiding principles to prevent them.

Implementation

- Scholars who curate disciplinary teams and projects can establish guiding principles to prevent blind spots, such as letting rigor and evidence guide what constitutes a diverse range of views.

- Scholars may also consult with colleagues with diverse viewpoints who are not on the curating team, providing a more objective external set of eyes.
- Curating scholars can identify models of intellectually diverse conferences or journal issues and then reach out and seek information about how they achieved their menu of offerings.



Example for adaptation

Viewpoint diversity in academic settings does not necessarily mean including fringe ideas. Including viewpoints that are fringe because they are genuinely unscientific can lead to the “balance as bias” problem, where a false impression of a scientific debate is created by overrepresenting fringe views in public forums. In contrast, unpopular views representing rigorous lines of inquiry can be proactively included in teams, conferences, literature reviews, journal issues, and so forth. Scholars curating such collections or forums can consult with colleagues from diverse perspectives and read both source material and critiques closely. Once familiar with the source material, it is usually not especially difficult to distinguish critiques of an unpopular viewpoint that are substantive from those that are tendentious. When in doubt, curators can give contrarian or unpopular viewpoints the benefit of the doubt. A more difficult curation challenge arises when groupthink in a discipline makes a clearly unrigorous viewpoint popular. In such cases, the viewpoint can be included with critiques, especially if the intended audience is scholars of the discipline in which the viewpoint is popular.

Write in a way that will convey heterodox perspectives effectively.

To effectively convey their perspective, scholars with heterodox views should steelman the prevailing viewpoints in a way that is not equivocating. Furthermore, an argument is difficult for gatekeepers in a discipline to dismiss or deflect with ad hominem attacks when the argument comes from a respected colleague. Neutral observers — including other scientists but also journalists and the public — also take notice more easily when an orthodoxy is being challenged by a well-known insider. Conversely, a little-known scholar making a heterodox argument is often easy to dismiss unconsciously as someone who must not know the ins and outs of the field. Taking the time to build relationships and establish a solid scholarly reputation can pay off for heterodox perspectives in the long run.

Implementation

- A scholar with heterodox perspectives can convey their work effectively by writing clearly, plainly, and concisely, using stark visuals when possible. Challenging the prevailing orthodoxy is often effective if it is too clear and compelling to ignore. Writing that takes its claims or critiques farther than the evidence will bear is easy to dismiss, and equivocal or obscurantist writing is easy to ignore.
- Scholars with heterodox perspectives can write with academic insiders to help elevate their message. Orthodoxy-challenging arguments are often most effective when they come from scholars who are seen as insiders by the gatekeepers of the prevailing orthodoxy.
- Scholars taking the time to mount more heterodox perspectives without self-censoring as their reputation grows, can increase the chances that colleagues take note, listen, and extend the benefit of the doubt.



Anecdote for Consideration

Intellectual Life Case Study: The debate over the climate change scenario “RCP8.5”

The debate in climate change science surrounding the use of the scenario “RCP8.5” illustrates several of the above recommendations — for instance, the importance of steelmanning and writing lucidly, the benefit of writing with insiders when it comes to convincing gatekeepers of the established view, and the fact that heterodox writers pointing out scientific blind spots can expect praise in addition to criticism.

Climate change research uses scenarios — projections of future emissions, forcing (i.e., how strong the greenhouse effect is as a result of cumulative emissions), and warming — to project future impacts of climate change. The most commonly used scenario in recent climate change research is called Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 (RCP8.5, where “8.5” refers to 8.5 W/m² forcing by 2100 in the scenario). RCP8.5 projects a world of 4 to 5 degrees C warming by the year 2100, and it is frequently used in research as a “business as usual” or “reference” scenario. Studies using RCP8.5 produce some of the most alarming news headlines.



Anecdote for Consideration (continued)

In 2017 and 2018, Justin Ritchie published three papers from his Ph.D. thesis at the University of British Columbia that argued that the high emissions implied by RCP8.5 relied on several unrealistic assumptions that caused projected global coal use to dramatically increase in this scenario, even in places where it was already decreasing, in a manner at odds with historical patterns and energy experts' understanding of the energy system.

Ritchie's findings did not initially have much influence on how climate change researchers used these scenarios, but frustration about these issues with RCP8.5 among energy experts eventually boiled over into an often-acrimonious Twitter debate in mid-2019 between energy and climate modelers under the hashtag #RCP85isBollox. Those criticizing what they saw as misuse of RCP8.5 accused their colleagues of sloppy and alarmist headline-motivated science; those defending RCP8.5's prominent position in climate research argued that climate-cycle feedbacks could plausibly still produce 4 to 5 degrees of warming, even if RCP8.5's emissions pathways did not materialize, and therefore the attention their critics were paying to RCP8.5 not only was overblown but also gave fuel to climate change deniers.

This debate got the attention of Zeke Hausfather — a rising-star climate researcher who had coauthored papers with senior insiders in the climate field such as Michael Mann and Gavin Schmidt. In August 2019, Hausfather wrote an "explainer" of the debate for the website Carbon Brief, which attempted to steelman both sides. Then, in December 2019, Hausfather and Ritchie coauthored a blog post for the Breakthrough Institute, which more pointedly critiqued the notion of using RCP8.5 (and its successor, SSP5-8.5) as "business as usual" on the grounds of its coal assumptions and the fact that the International Energy Agency's projections of emissions up to 2040 were already clearly far below those of RCP8.5. Hausfather and Ritchie instead argued that "business as usual" would result in less than 3 degrees C of warming by 2100.

Hausfather and Ritchie's blog post got much wider attention than Ritchie's earlier papers had and even prompted the author David Wallace-Wells, writing in *New York Magazine* two



Anecdote for Consideration (continued)

days after Hausfather and Ritchie's blog post came out, to walk back some of the claims from his best seller *The Uninhabitable Earth*, which had been based on projections using RCP8.5. Hausfather followed this up with a similar January 2020 commentary in *Nature*, this time coauthored with Glen Peters, a senior and high-profile insider in the climate change community. This commentary made international headlines and has since become widely cited (260 times, according to Google Scholar, as of Nov. 1, 2021 — more than all three of Ritchie's 2017–2018 papers combined). Citing Hausfather and Peters (2020), the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (2021) acknowledged that RCP8.5 and SSP5-8.5 were seen by many as implausible.

Ritchie coauthored three more papers related to the scenarios debate that came out in 2020 and 2021, two of which — coauthored with Roger Pielke Jr. of the University of Colorado — argued that the misuse of RCP8.5 constituted a major failure of scientific integrity. Pielke — himself a senior and high-profile science-policy scholar — had been a central figure in the #RCP85isBollox debate online, as well as other previous and sometimes-acrimonious debates with high-profile climate scientists such as Mann and Schmidt. One of Pielke and Ritchie's 2021 papers on the scenarios elicited critical replies from several senior climate scientists, including Schmidt and U.S. National Academy of Sciences president Marcia McNutt. These replies sharply critiqued Pielke and Ritchie's assertions about scientific integrity but notably also largely agreed with their assertion that RCP8.5 is no longer an appropriate "business as usual" scenario, demonstrating that, on the key point in the RCP8.5 debate, Ritchie's (and Pielke's, Hausfather's, and others') view has, by now, largely prevailed.¹⁹

Global Curriculum

The creation or adoption of course curricula is a key aspect of academic life where academic affairs professionals can effectively integrate open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement into courses. This is an area where administrators, staff, and faculty in schools, programs, and departments can prioritize intellectual diversity and align course material around related principles like constructive disagreement in ways that make sense for them.

Use course designations and skill/area requirements to define constructive disagreement and open inquiry as valuable, learnable practices.

Colleges and universities already use course designations and skill/area requirements to signal cardinal skill sets they believe are valuable for all students to attain. Students seek out courses marked for writing intensives, quantitative analysis, diversity, and more. A requirement or area for constructive disagreement or open inquiry can signal a university's priorities for students and bake these skills deeper in the curriculum. Courses marked as such can promise an open classroom environment welcome to all germane questions asked in good faith, and specific opportunities to hone dialogue across difference.

Implementation

- The university's curriculum committee can be tasked by its chair or the provost to develop area designations for open inquiry and constructive disagreement.
- The provost or vice provosts can task deans and chairs to identify courses already engaging students in open inquiry and constructive disagreement and invite faculty to share their successful strategies in order to promote interest, model area teaching norms, and build a foundation of courses for the area.
- The curriculum committee can establish a course prospectus and application process for new or existing courses to be granted a designation in either skill area.
- Department/college chairs and directors of graduate study can integrate these skills into courses and develop visible pathways or distribution requirements for students completing the major.

- A designation for viewpoint diversity could also be created to acknowledge interdisciplinary courses that gather numerous perspectives together, compare competing epistemologies, and reveal disciplinary blind spots.



Example for adaptation

Area description for constructive disagreement: In careers and the working world, more problems are resolved and relationships deepened when individuals can learn to disagree effectively without reprisal or self-censoring. Constructive-disagreement courses aim to instill in students the ability to dialogue well across differences of opinion or interpretation of fact, to extend intellectual benefit of the doubt in conversation, to practice both humility and curiosity when discussing ideas, and to differentiate offense from discomfort. Courses engage students in debate and perspective-taking around complex topics while deepening disciplinary content and skills.

Use departmental learning goals to foster open inquiry and curiosity toward differing perspectives.

Departmental learning goals declare the direction, values, and content a department seeks to prioritize. By naming inquiry and curiosity, high-level goals can impact the design of new courses, the climate across existing courses, and student approaches to the discipline. Department chairs can work to ensure that these goals cultivate open inquiry, respect, and curiosity for a range of views. By doing so, they also implicitly guide faculty teaching practices and expectations for students.

Implementation

- Departmental goals should be general, applicable to a wide variety of courses within a major, and relevant to the discipline.
- Goals might live on the department's website as a signal to parents, prospective students, and faculty candidates; they can also appear on all course syllabuses to cultivate universal values.

- Departmental goals can be placed on strategy documents or course proposal procedures to cultivate a deeper presence of core values.
- Regular discussion and reflection through departmental programming can build faculty consensus around goals and increase department-wide practice.
- Departments can provide models of goals-informed practice through readings, public events, and resources, thereby improving goal accessibility and comprehension for all.



Examples for adaptation

- Department of English: Expose students to a range of literary expression across historical eras, genres, identity representations, and ideological diversity.
- Department of Biology: Foster student interest and ability to ask new, bold questions about the natural world openly and in good faith.

Use multisection and course sequence learning goals to foster open inquiry and curiosity toward varying viewpoints.

Courses in sequence or with multiple sections are often foundational to the major and help students build firm praxis as they develop. As such, learning goals shared across course sections or a course sequence can shape applied skills and specific content over time, thereby deepening student familiarity with disciplinary modes of engagement and inquiry. Building open inquiry and viewpoint diversity into these course goals can also increase the proportion of the student body exposed to healthy modes of intellectual inquiry and debate relevant to their course of study. When written well, goals for these courses can enrich skills and content fostered in a course while allowing instructors room to innovate.

Implementation

- Multisection and course sequence goals should support relevant skills and content, and they
- All section and sequence instructors can be encouraged to refer to these goals throughout the term as needed.

- Course coordinators can discuss with instructors the nature of these goals and effective ways to approach them.
- Providing instructors with sample goals and relevant teaching tools can help integrate goals deeper into sections and sequences.



Examples for adaptation

- History survey course: Students will learn to weigh the contextual merits and blind spots of historical, political, and social perspectives.
- Intro to Sociology course: Students will learn how to formulate innovative, evidence-driven sociological questions.

Classroom Approaches

In many ways, promoting the values of intellectual diversity and dialogue across difference starts and ends in the classroom. Classrooms provide the perfect laboratory for practicing and improving habits of heart and mind for good thinking, and students must see institutions living by these values in their primary space (classrooms) if they are to trust them. While the HxA Tools & Resources Library provides a variety of specific lessons and strategies for faculty and students, this Guide offers several overarching principles and practices that all instructors can adopt to improve the free expression cultures in their classrooms.²⁰ The culture of an institution can start to change as much with a simple act in the classroom as with a major policy shift.

Include policies in the syllabus that cultivate constructive disagreement.

The syllabus can establish core classroom expectations, initial course tone, and ongoing guidelines for learning and behavior. Including policies and statements that encourage constructive disagreement can improve classroom dialogue and lower the heat during sensitive moments. A syllabus is only as effective as an instructor makes it, so faculty might consider how they use the syllabus in class.

Implementation

- Faculty can include statements in their syllabus or learning management system (Canvas, Blackboard, etc.).
- Colleges and departments can include standard language in their required syllabus templates.
- Faculty can be encouraged to discuss their syllabus policies in class and refer back to them throughout the term.
- Departments can offer professional development workshops to help faculty create policies about disagreement that are responsive to the needs and realities of their teaching.
- Departments can host discussions in faculty meetings and public spaces about training students to engage across lines of difference, rather than self-censor and tread lightly for fear of potential offense.



Example for adaptation

The opportunity for disagreement may arise in this course, and I encourage constructive dialogue in these circumstances. Students should listen to one another and ask constructive questions about others' views; recall with humility the limits to their own understanding; assume that others do not intend offense; meet potential offense with clarifying questions; resolve to find common ground; and stay focused on the ideas at hand.



Example for adaptation

My hope is that our class can be a space of bold dialogue and earnest inquiry. To be so, we must all agree to engage with disagreement in good faith and not fear of offense; assume others mean no offense; be humble about the extent of our knowledge and what we can assume about others' intentions; listen deeply to fully grasp others' views before responding; be willing to ask questions in good faith that disrupt core assumptions; exercise genuine curiosity for the views of others, no matter how different; take deep breaths when things get heated; and authentically pursue questions and ideas that genuinely intrigue us.

Learn how to lower the heat during challenging moments.

Cancellation and damaged professional lives often emerge from classroom moments that quickly spiral. Either through emotional reactions to incidents or unfortunate responses from students or faculty, situations are left unresolved between parties and taken to social media or public message boards, where details and intentions swiftly disappear. Faculty can learn skills that turn these moments into learning opportunities, cool emotions down, effectively note errors without ceding class control, and protect moments as valuable classroom experiences rather than national news.

Implementation

- To get ahead of perceived offense over use of particular words, images, or representations, faculty can regularly remind students that their pedagogical choices are intentional and rooted in learning goals, and that they welcome opportunities to clarify those choices in class or during office hours.
- Faculty can assure students through the syllabus, during the first day of class, and in a difficult moment that they welcome diversity of views and representations.
- When a student expresses concern during class over the use of a contested word or representation, faculty can follow a careful process that includes:
 - Asking the student to clarify the nature of their concern
 - Repeating the student's concern and asking if they've been properly understood
 - Explaining their teaching intentions or gently asking a question that challenges the student's interpretation of events, where appropriate
 - If possible, connecting the moment back to content and resuming class while verbalizing how the student's concerns can further inform discussion
 - Thanking the student for raising the issue and inviting them to discuss the instructor's choices further after class, if desired
- Faculty should be slow to apologize in the moment, not out of self-preservation but to avoid closing down an opportunity to discuss complex issues; a swift apology also affirms a student's claims of offense over an instructor's aims, shifting classroom control.
- Faculty can review their syllabus/lesson plan and identify moments of potential friction, review strategies for navigating such moments beforehand, and ensure their pedagogical reasons are clear to students.

Create space during class for questions and discussion.

Open inquiry and constructive disagreement thrive when students have the space to wrestle with material and engage one another. Many courses, however, are focused on moving through as much material as possible, making class a time for rapid note-taking and occasional questions squeezed in. This approach can leave students feeling disconnected from materials and ostracized if they encounter difficult ideas they can't easily understand. Especially in classes driven by ideas and interpretation,

ensuring students have space to formulate and ask questions, push back, and consider other perspectives will improve the odds that they disagree well and in good faith.

Implementation

- Where possible, faculty can consider reducing content “coverage” in a course to make room for longer discussions. Engagement with the reduced content will likely be richer than rushing through more material.
- Faculty can consider a variety of simple approaches to stoke questions, discussion, and disagreement: “think-pair-share,” where students consider a question, discuss with a partner, and share points from their discussion with the class; “perspective-taking,” where students make arguments for positions they don’t hold or dislike; and “jigsaws,” where discussion groups mix and match to expose students to a variety of opinions on a topic or reading.
- Instructors can wait longer after asking questions. While instructors are often quick to fill the silence, research suggests that students benefit from a solid three to five seconds, or longer, of wait time before developing an answer.²¹ The lengthier time can permit more perspectives and personality types to respond.
- Faculty can consider using weightier class activities like full-on debates that specifically invite students to disagree, make their case, and learn from their opponents. Debates are most effective when followed up with time for reflection and dissection.



Example for adaptation

An instructor splits students into groups of three or four and asks them to discuss their interpretations of the racially controversial figure Caliban in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Representatives from each group then join new groups, faithfully summarize the views expressed, and discuss opinion patterns they see emerging. Back in the larger group, the instructor asks students to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various interpretations and leads the class toward an emerging consensus or respect for oppositional views.

Promote winsome disruption²² in class.

In many class discussions, emotions can start to fly and the natural response of humans can lead to interruption and brusqueness, alongside the opposite extreme of self-censorship. Against this way of engaging, faculty can model winsome disruption — a willingness to challenge unspoken assumptions and ways of thinking graciously and constructively. By approaching students this way, reinforcing these principles in the syllabus, and moderating student discussion, faculty can help students learn to become more efficient and magnetic conversants.

Implementation

- Instructors can introduce themselves and their class as a place to be gracious and rigorous with one another — to ask tough questions and push one another in ways that build up and seek to honestly know the others' perspectives.
- Instructors can respond to student questions by answering them, then warmly pushing on an assumption baked into their question, affirming the student's response or helping them think through their assumptions. Students will observe and, over time, seek to replicate this approach in conversation.
- Class expectations can include basic practices like listening well, favoring curiosity over fear of offense, restating opponent's views back to them before responding, and remembering that everyone in class seeks to learn, discover, and be affirmed as valuable thinkers. Promote winsome disruption in class.
- Rather than simple icebreakers at the start of the term, instructors can regularly pair students up to learn more about each other, creating deeper connections, especially before diving into complex topics. Students will be warmed to each other and more ready to trust others' intentions.

Seek diverse community opportunities to showcase classroom learning in practice.

Most disciplines address applied knowledge at some point, from field research or statistical analysis to literacy and storytelling in English. Outside the walls of academia, this knowledge is adopted and practiced across a variety of ideologies and organizations whose examples can enrich the classroom experience. Faculty can do much to help students recognize the multiple ways individuals apply ideas and practices, breaking down assumptions and echo chambers around who owns or best understands particular concepts.

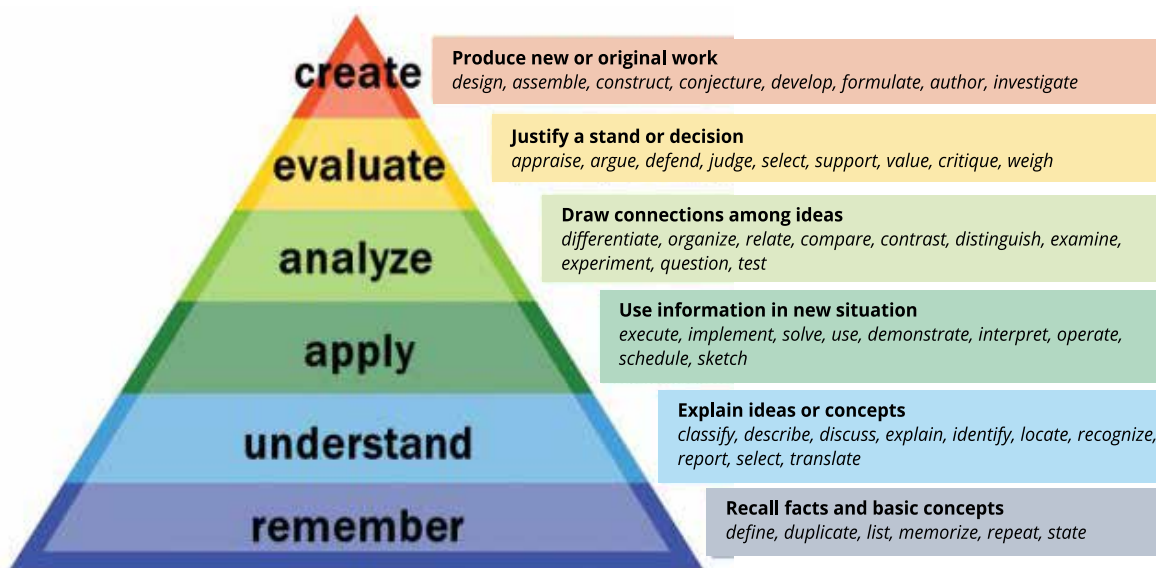
Implementation

- Faculty can survey their syllabuses for opportunities to showcase applied practices and work to display ideologically diverse representations of those practices.
- Syllabus language can underscore the value of witnessing varied practices and approaches, emphasizing the need for students to privilege considering diverse philosophies over fear of being made uncomfortable in the moment.
- Faculty can approach chairs or deans to request or raise funds to invite diverse local practitioners into the classroom, supplying considered reasons for what students will learn and how they will develop.
- Faculty can provide students with an anonymous survey, gathering their interest in various kinds of applications and practices to better align opportunities with a given class.

Follow Bloom's Taxonomy to develop course assessments.

Bloom's Taxonomy (Figure 3) places lower-order skills (e.g., remembering) at the bottom of the learning pyramid and higher-order skills (e.g., creating) at the top. To signal the value of being able to articulate diverse viewpoints (typically associated with higher-order skills like analyzing and evaluating), student assessments need to consider the pyramid as a whole. A student assessment that is solely focused on the lower-order skills of remembering and understanding, while falling short of the higher-order skills set out by Bloom, is likely not evaluating students' analysis and comparison of diverse viewpoints.

Figure 3: Bloom's Taxonomy, created by Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching



Implementation

- Faculty and instructors can emphasize the importance of viewpoint diversity in course content by aligning course objectives and, subsequently, course assessments with Bloom's Taxonomy.
- Faculty and instructors can be transparent with students about how they will be assessed by showing students Bloom's Taxonomy at the start of the semester and explaining each lower- and higher-order skill, including what they look like in practice.
- During the process of assessment, faculty and instructors can give detailed and specific individual feedback to students by using the language of the skills outlined in the taxonomy.



Example for adaptation

When assigning a policy brief for an essay assignment, one professor used a simple template to instruct students on how to incorporate diverse perspectives: "Look at arguments that tend to support the proposition and arguments that tend to refute it. Reach a reasoned conclusion." This expressly demands that students both show knowledge and understanding of at least two opinions on the topic in question, and then synthesize and evaluate them to reach a conclusion, which are directly related to the higher-order skills of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Draw on a diverse range of evaluative practices to design course assessments.

To ensure that students are able to express their knowledge of different views on a given topic and show their ability to constructively disagree, faculty and instructors can offer multiple types of assessments throughout the course. Courses are made up of students with a diverse range of strengths, abilities, and interests, and multiple avenues of assessment will help address such diversity. Furthermore, varying assessments will also help instructors assess academic and vocational skills, if a course calls for such assessments.

Implementation

- Instructors can offer assessments, such as essays, oral defenses, debates, group projects, in-class exercises, academic reflections, and final exams, which are all well-suited to assess knowledge of diverse viewpoints and demonstrate constructive disagreement.
- To integrate vocational and academic skills, instructors can assign groups of students who hold a diverse range of intellectual views relevant to the assignment to complete projects, while implementing tasks required in the relevant profession.
- Instructors can prepare to address student limitations by offering multiple assessments for one task. For instance, formal debates inherently introduce at least two viewpoints into course content, but assessing students solely on their oral performance may not capture all that they know or can do.



Example for adaptation

In a public affairs course on lobbying, one instructor assigned students a basic monitoring task. Teams of students followed media and political trends relevant to a selected client. While there were team grades for this task, students were also assessed on individual reflections following models set forth by Gary Rolfe or Graham Gibbs.²³



Example for adaptation

When setting the requirements for oral defenses for journalism and public relations students, one faculty member required students to choose a controversial statement from a list provided, such as “testing on animals should be banned” and “funding should be diverted away from police departments and toward social services.” The students were told to prepare arguments both for and against the proposition, which they submitted for grading. Students were also interviewed on the topic live on camera in front of the whole class. This allowed them to showcase their skills and be evaluated based on Bloom’s Taxonomy. Which side of the question the students took was determined by coin toss at the beginning of the interview, thus not putting them in the position to share personal beliefs.

Model what you expect students to accomplish.

Instructors modeling and discussing a behavior, attitude, or skill that is expected of students can increase the chances of student success on course assessments. Students may understand the structure of a debate between individuals with competing views, for example, but they may be unaware of how to incorporate different viewpoints on a topic in an essay. If an objective of a course is for students to practically apply viewpoint diversity, instructors can ensure student success on assessments by modeling such an application.

Implementation

- At the start of the semester, instructors can describe a time when they changed their mind about a belief they held and give examples demonstrating how their mind was changed. They can continue this practice, through a range of examples, such as speaking and writing, throughout the semester.
- Similarly, throughout the semester, instructors can challenge students to keep track of when they change their mind on any given issue during the course — not about something the student has learned and formed an opinion on for the first time, but about something on which the student had an established opinion that was changed by the professor, wider reading, or another student. Instructors can use this practice to formatively assess students' ability to consider a range of viewpoints.

Faculty and Staff Professional Development

In order for faculty and staff to provide rich, evolving experiences and opportunities for students, they must have their own opportunities to reflect on their approaches, trade notes about challenges and solutions, and consider models and new research. Because faculty rarely receive consistent professional development (even in the form of teacher training), these opportunities may be especially welcome. Noninstructor staff who also support student learning (e.g., librarians and teaching or humanities center staff) are too often ignored when these experiences are designed. Ensuring that they have ample professional development can enrich other core spaces students frequent.

Build a digital resource library that supports faculty and graduate student teaching and writing around intellectual diversity and disagreement.

Because of the demands on everyone in higher education, a digital repository of resources and tools can support especially busy faculty and graduate students who seek to quickly learn about new practices, when they find the time. Such a repository can be continuously updated with original and linked content, offering the freshest research and suggested practices for inquiry and dialogue across difference. Over time, the repository can also begin to reflect the particular approaches to open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement that are unique to an institution.

Implementation

- A task force or team representing varied departments and roles might determine what sorts of tools and resources to include.
- Material could include strategies for open inquiry and viewpoint diversity in classroom practice, crafting teaching philosophies, research, writing, attending conferences, crafting a dissertation or book, and developing a scholarly profile.
- Material may be most successful if it covers a range of disciplines and faculty ranks or stages of graduate training.

- Tools and resources could include links to existing libraries at HxA, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), the Institute for Humane Studies, Living Room Conversation, and other organizations supporting this Guide's principles.
- Creators could establish a process for commissioning and submitting original tools and resources developed by the campus community, and make clear who owns and maintains the repository, where it is located, and how it might be sustained and scaffolded up over time.
- Research small-grant funding for professional development endeavors offered by organizations like HxA or on-campus units.
- Plans for publicizing and marketing the repository might consider a soft launch, a full launch, and ongoing updates for faculty.

Incorporate values of intellectual diversity and constructive disagreement into training for teaching assistants.

Graduate students instruct a significant portion of the student population by teaching lower-level courses, facilitating discussion sections, grading, and holding study sessions. In each of these instances their behavior, posture toward students, and management of issues instill and model certain values for students and the learning process. Graduate students who show that they are curious about their students' perspectives will engage differing opinions and encourage bold inquiries, which, in turn, encourages similar student practices and underscores that intellectual diversity is welcome throughout a department's curriculum. Departments can take a variety of steps to cultivate these values in graduate students.

Implementation

- Deans can lobby for faculty who share these values to take up positions with influence over graduate students like director of graduate studies, director of first-year writing, and course coordinators.
- Directors and coordinators in charge of graduate student teacher assistantships (TAs) and teaching can ensure that training materials (e.g., readings, workshops, short courses) equip graduate instructors to encourage viewpoint diversity and constructive disagreement in their classrooms and oversight.

- Faculty observing graduate student teaching can include in their rubric/notes some indicators (e.g., constructive disagreement, diverse questions) measuring a classroom climate open to inquiry and supportive of varying student opinions or beliefs.
- Directors of graduate studies and administrative staff can ensure that the graduate portion of the department's website and the graduate student handbook signal a culture of open inquiry and viewpoint diversity, underscoring their interest in students who share or are curious about those values.
- Faculty advising graduate student theses can be reflective about their coaching and guidance, encouraging authentic student inquiry regardless of personal bias, and emboldening students to disagree confidently and constructively with their readings and source material.

Ensure nonfaculty professional staff receive ample training and support for encouraging intellectual diversity.

From university librarians and teaching center staff to residential college deans and other center professionals, a huge range of staff regularly interface with students intellectually while teaching little, if at all, in a classroom. These staff help students locate university resources, further enrich skills beyond the classroom like research, and model a certain university culture. Providing these staff with professional development opportunities to uphold intellectual diversity on campus can further strengthen campus climate.

Implementation

- Library and teaching center directors can provide staff trainings using readings around the science of viewpoint diversity and tools and resources for promoting constructive disagreement.
- Libraries and other intellectual units on campus can use team meetings to brainstorm principles and approaches for engaging with students in ways that encourage inquiry and research into a range of viewpoints and questions.
- Non-faculty staff like instructional designers and student center professionals can develop communities of practice to share experiences with students and troubleshoot approaches for encouraging dialogue or inquiry across difference in research, writing, and campus events.

- Staff with influence over public spaces (e.g., library exhibits) can develop ideologically diverse materials that invite respectful debate over crucial issues.
- Residential coordinators can equip residential assistants (RAs) with tools and approaches for developing living area cultures emphasizing empathy and curiosity for others.



Example for adaptation

The director or associate director of a campus teaching and learning center runs a book group for faculty developers on HxA's *All Minus One* (an adaption of John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*), Irshad Manji's *Don't Label Me*, Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt's *The Coddling of the American Mind*, and other texts on intellectual diversity not typically associated with educational development bibliographies. Staff read and discuss, having an honest conversation about shared principles and points of disagreement, while considering programming that can help faculty deploy broader principles of diversity in the classroom.²⁴



Example for adaptation

In a team meeting, university reference librarians review existing parameters and practices for book accession, seeking to identify assumptions or intellectual biases behind what is chosen and bypassed for the library's collection. This leads to deeper discussion about how digital research guides are structured and whether they can convey more attentiveness to viewpoint diversity and the needs of ideologically diverse faculty and students.²⁵



Example for adaptation

As a dorm event, a residential hall director runs a discussion around how to live and disagree well with fellow students outside the classroom. They ask students what topics and trends are active at the moment, explore where student conversations outside of class tend to happen, and offer some ideas to help students extend the benefit of the doubt to one another. They also make a small collection of digital resources available from the Constructive Dialogue Institute (former OpenMind) and HxA's Tools & Resources Library.

Create awards for instructors who exhibit and instill intellectual diversity in their work.

Teaching awards exist to affirm a variety of values including student engagement, independent learning, and creative approaches. These high-profile and monetary awards highlight a university's priorities and encourage others to pursue similar approaches. Establishing awards acknowledging instructors who promote dialogue across difference or viewpoint diversity in class can contribute to a teaching culture around these values. In addition, awardees are typically granted space in university news or ceremonies to speak about their approaches, further educating the community about effective ways to teach these values.

Implementation

- Provosts or deans can work with a committee of instructors to establish parameters and a rubric for winning faculty members, ensuring some faculty buy-in for the new tradition.
- Parameters can include getting students to effectively disagree over complex topics, pursue nontraditional lines of research, and adopt oppositional perspectives in order to learn more.
- Provosts or deans can reserve funds in the budget and devote a yearly portion of their newsletter, annual report, or website to awardees, ensuring the award comes with meaningful material rewards.
- Awardees can be invited to write or speak about their teaching approaches in a public campus forum, allowing colleagues to take note and encouraging students to seek out their courses.

- Awardees can be invited onto the curriculum committee or other intellectual service to infuse their ideas into the intellectual life of the college or university.
- Awards can also be reserved for graduate student TAs and instructors of record, infusing graduate culture with similar values and ensuring that introductory and gateway courses taught or TAed by graduate students also include intellectual diversity.



Example for adaptation

The Free Student Inquiry Award acknowledges an instructor who encourages their students to explore bold, new, or heterodox ideas in their research and writing. Awardees create a classroom culture of curiosity that welcomes questions, encourages students to question assumptions and traditional approaches, and supports their good-faith inquiries into new or surprising areas for the discipline or major.



Example for adaptation

The Mill Instructor Award, named for John Stuart Mill, acknowledges an instructor who cultivates constructive disagreement and mutually effective dialogue across difference in their classroom. Awardees invite students to see all sides of an issue, wade into uncomfortable perspectives with responsibility and empathy, and seek to learn as much as they can about oppositional views. Their students grow as constructive conversants and mature thinkers able to engage complex topics with poise and authenticity.

Offer workshops that familiarize faculty with classroom approaches to constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity.

Faculty enjoy a broad range of workshop offerings at many colleges and universities around topics like diversity and inclusion, active learning, Title IX concerns, and more. While this Guide's principles

are effective for teaching, they are not always easy to adopt, and faculty need practice and support. Workshops can help faculty find a community of practice to talk out challenges, discover approaches they might not have considered, and wrap their heads around ideas through discussion and examples.

Implementation

- Faculty, chairs, deans, or vice provosts can approach their campus teaching center about developing a workshop on these topics, as most centers are receptive to faculty requests. Resistant centers, at minimum, can be included in conversations about the topics.
- Chairs and deans can seek out external partners to provide workshops — a variety of para-academic and nonprofit organizations provide speakers, resources, and workshops in support of better dialogue across difference.
- Faculty facing resistance can develop their own workshops, looking to HxA's HxCommunities for support and ideas, if one exists for their discipline.
- Workshops can include topics like stoking productive debate in class, responding to student requests for greater sensitivity, representing intellectual diversity in course readings, replacing restrictive diversity approaches with higher shared principles, diffusing moments before they develop into attempted canceling, and more.
- Workshop titles and tone can be warm, inviting, and encouraging to help participants feel hopeful and invigorated.



Example for adaptation

How to Teach Well and Avoid Getting Canceled: In this workshop, faculty will learn how to de-escalate classroom incidents before they end up in the student newspaper. Our students are enthusiastic and motivated by a strong sense of right and wrong, which can lead to strong responses. When students begin reacting to a difficult word or representation, how can faculty respond? In this workshop we'll explore how to lower the heat of student reactions, engage their concerns as teachers, turn any incident into a teachable moment, and avoid the damages of apologizing too soon. You are the insurance policy for your classroom content: Come learn more!

Similar to workshops, support faculty communities of practice around open inquiry and viewpoint diversity.

While workshops provide a quick dive into salient topics, they can lack long-term support. Communities of practice can give faculty a web of support, a regular and reliable place to bring challenges and issues, and a creative space to test new ideas over time. Particularly for this Guide's principles, general consensus around them is still lagging, and some faculty may feel afraid or conspicuous about attending public workshops. Communities of practice, particularly when kept small, also provide privacy and security as confidence and skill sets grow.

Implementation

- Centers for teaching are typically equipped to provide space, resources, and support for faculty to meet and chat; interested faculty can approach their center, or center staff can publicize calls for participants.
- Department chairs or deans can create an interest, connect interested faculty, provide a small budget for food, and establish a logistical lead for regular meeting plans.
- Faculty can also make their own plans and meet at local coffee shops or homes. This approach may require some courage to ask others their thoughts after detecting similar beliefs, and the [HxA list of members](#) may be of service.
- Faculty might consider whether a community should remain internal to a department, college, or campus, or meet with regional partners.
- Communities can gather around a number of practices, from gathering to discuss issues to reading articles and books, sharing resources, or even observing one another's teaching to learn and provide notes.

Reinforce intellectual diversity and constructive disagreement in tenure and promotion.

Incentives around tenure and promotion are often keyed to values a college or department finds valuable, including academic rigor and diversity and inclusion. In annual reports and tenure files, faculty are often asked to highlight their commitments to principles like these in written statements. Incorporating expectations around open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement — how faculty cultivate these values in class or practice them throughout their research agendas — can

help build a vibrant intellectual culture in departments and propel discussion about effective ways to support and practice these guiding principles on campus.

Implementation

- Required diversity and inclusion statements can feel artificial or forced at times. Dossiers can instead invite faculty to speak to more expansive values of intellectual diversity and constructive disagreement in their research or teaching summaries. This practice should not be compulsory but can connect these principles to daily practices.
- At third-year or midtenure reviews, supervisors can invite faculty to share how they stoke constructive disagreement in class or seek to be innovative in their research, and provide guidance on deepening those practices.
- Deans and chairs can request that faculty highlight in annual reports their efforts to promote these principles in their classrooms and disciplines, in tandem with traditional diversity efforts, if desired.
- As part of new-hire trainings, departments can reinforce expectations around intellectual diversity and encourage new faculty to find unique, authentic ways to own it in their teaching and research.

Further Resources for Engaging Across Lines of Difference

Although this Guide marks out relatively clean “zones” of higher education to consider engaging — institutional processes, student culture, academic life — campuses are also an exciting buzz of complex, intermingling cultures and ideas. We engage with people and ideologies all day long in the hallways, on email, in our offices, in meetings, over lunch, and more. What interpersonal skills and mindsets can prepare us to engage opposing views and see things another way, wherever we are? How can we better encourage constructive disagreement whenever conflict finds us?

Heterodox Academy hosts an extensive library of tools and resources designed by members, friends, and allies for exactly these situations. This Guide incorporates three of the tools users have found to be most effective for encouraging constructive discussion across difference. Readers throughout the higher education landscape will find these tools helpful, and several include tips specific to instructors.

Dialectical Thinking

Designed by Andrew Hartz

From the tool: Dialectical thinking can help people understand issues more completely and accurately, develop more effective solutions, have more productive dialogue, improve their relationships with people they disagree with, and increase their emotional stability and mental health. This worksheet aims to help people learn how to use dialectical thinking to explore a range of controversial, political, or academic topics.

[Dialectical Thinking](#) is also available on the Heterodox Academy website.

Dialectical Thinking Classroom Activity Worksheet

All-Or-Nothing Thinking understands viewpoints as all one thing or another — also called “Either/Or Thinking.”

- All Good vs. All Evil
- Totally Sane vs. Totally Crazy
- All Benefits vs. All Costs
- All Pro vs. All Con
- Always Wise vs. Always Ignorant
- Only a Victim vs. Only a Victimizer
- All Reward vs. All Risk
- 100% of the Evidence vs. 0% of the Evidence
- Pure Altruism vs. Pure Selfishness
- Only Pure Intentions vs. Only Malice
- Omnipotently powerful vs. 100% powerless
- Other

Dialectical Thinking accepts that in our daily lives opposing sides almost always both have some merit — also called “Both/And Thinking.” Dialectical thinking involves the ability to take others’ perspectives and to accept uncertainty, ambiguity, and nuance.

Dialectical Thinking is difficult because:

1. Social problems can be upsetting, and when we’re upset, we like certainty.
2. It’s hard to tolerate that there’s a lot we don’t know and don’t understand.
3. We can experience people who disagree with us as aggressive, arrogant, or rude, and when we do, it’s painful to acknowledge when they have a point.
4. We may fear that if we acknowledge that an opponent has a point, it will cause us to lose the argument.
5. We may worry that others will use any concessions we make to invalidate our argument or hurt/shame us.
6. We may think that more extreme arguments are more persuasive/effective.
7. It’s difficult to acknowledge negative things about people or views we cherish
8. Other reasons

Despite these fears, dialectical thinking is more likely to:

- Facilitate dialogue
- Help us understand things
- Help us understand each other
- Boost our emotional stability
- Find effective solutions
- Help people get along with each other
- Increase inclusion, empathy, and justice
- Be more persuasive

Practicing Dialectical Thinking

Try to come up with at least three pros, three cons, and one uncertainty for an issue of your choice.

Try to think of the best arguments for all sides. A pro supports the argument, a con argues against it, and an uncertainty is anything that you yourself are unsure of that doesn't neatly fit as a pro or con.

Avoid making "straw man" arguments (weak arguments you can easily defeat) for other viewpoints. Instead, make "steel man" (strong and challenging) arguments for the view with which you disagree. Also, try to include genuine uncertainties about the issue as opposed to "it may not go far enough" arguments.

Issue: _____

<p>Pro:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
<p>Con:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
<p>Uncertainty:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.

Reflection Questions

1. Describe what it was like having to come up with both pros and cons of an issue. Did you have a hard time coming up with arguments for one side?
2. Look at the reasons dialectical thinking is difficult. Do one or more of those reasons resonate with you? For example, was it difficult to acknowledge negative things about issues or people we care about?
3. In going through the process of coming up with different arguments, did you think about the arguments any differently? Is there a position you are more willing to listen to that you hadn't previously considered?
4. How often do you read articles in the news or in your classes that reflect dialectical thinking vs. all-or-nothing thinking? Are there ways to consume information that could foster dialectical thinking? Are there other practices you could engage in that could help you increase your dialectical thinking?

Dialectical Thinking Classroom Activity

Instructor Suggestions

Dialectical thinking can help people understand issues more completely and accurately, develop more effective solutions, have more productive dialogue, improve their relationships with people with whom they disagree, and increase their emotional stability and mental health. This worksheet aims to help people learn how to use dialectical thinking to explore a range of controversial, political, and academic topics. Use this worksheet in a flexible way based on the needs and constraints of your class. Below are some suggestions for using the worksheet.

A. Read the first page of the sheet together as a class. This can take 15–20 minutes.

1. Try to provide a concrete example or two as an exemplar that your students might have familiarity with (e.g., a current event). For example, you could ask them to think of a hypothetical child whose parents are getting divorced. What are some reasons this divorce might be good or bad for the family? Pros could include reducing conflict between the parents or helping the parents feel happier and more fulfilled, both of which can make them better parents. Cons could include the stress of the divorce process, the child's difficulty seeing both parents, and the sadness and stress to all involved. A more political example could also be helpful, such as Medicare for all. Pros are that everyone will have health insurance and similar programs have been successfully implemented in many countries. Cons are that it could be costly and inefficient (as many government programs are), implemented in a corrupt or unfair way, or that the country is too large or diverse to sustain such a program, all of which could lead to an increase in social divisions. Obviously, there's much more to say about both examples.
2. If you have time, you can ask your students for examples based on their experience to ensure that they understand the exercise before they begin. You can encourage students to provide examples from their personal lives, from academic readings, movies/fiction, or political controversies. Non-political examples may be especially useful as students gradually become acquainted with the concept. Take a few minutes for questions that may arise to make sure that everyone understands the general concept. A more detailed discussion can occur after the exercise is complete.

B. Complete the practice exercise on page 2. If students complete this as small groups in class, it is estimated to take 15–30 minutes.

1. You can choose one topic for the entire class, or let students select different topics for different small groups. Students can pick any topic they choose for the exercise (carbon tax, amnesty for undocumented immigrants, affirmative action in university admissions, an assault weapon ban, etc.). They should feel free to select a topic that is more academic or related to your specific course.
2. Encourage your class to select a topic that will challenge them best. The ideal topic should be difficult for students without being too controversial for them to discuss productively. This will depend on the knowledge students have of issues, their emotional maturity, their specific sensitivities, their desire to build their dialectical thinking ability, time limitations, and the interpersonal dynamics of the class.
3. We recommend this exercise be done in small groups of about four or five students. But, based on the size of your class and your time constraints, you can have students complete the assignment alone, together with the entire class, or as homework individually or in groups.
4. After students complete the exercise, you can ask them to share their responses with the class or you can move to the next step.

C. Discuss the reflection questions. Discussing all of these questions as a class could take 30–60 minutes.

1. The reflection questions are a crucial way to help students build their abilities to think dialectically. It is very important to take time to do this adequately.
2. To encourage students to share their experiences, try to foster a non-judgmental environment and verbally state that goal to the class. It may help to share some of your own emotional difficulties if you feel comfortable doing so. You can also encourage students to share any thoughts, feelings, associations, observations, or reflections they've had — even if they seem exaggerated, irrational, conflicting, or contrary to what they expected. This may help more students open up if they are having difficulty.
3. Strong feelings are expected. If students deny having difficulty with the exercise, encourage them to consider what other people might experience. You may even want them to consider how they can advocate for more dialectical thinking in the world.

Additional Tips

Try to take a dialectical approach with students. Acknowledge the truth in points they make, and then encourage discussion of the other side whenever possible. Modeling dialectical thinking can help them utilize the concept. This may mean acknowledging the downsides of thinking dialectically itself. After all, it is true that sometimes when moral choices are stark, ambivalence can be counterproductive (e.g. mass murder).

- **Avoid arguing with students directly.** If they disagree, encourage them to try out this line of thinking. They're free to reject it if they so choose
- **Print out multiple copies of the sheet and complete more than one version of the exercise with students.** This could enhance their abilities to think dialectically.
- **Before the discussion, encourage students to write a 1-2 page response paper based on the reflection questions.** That may lead to a richer discussion. Reflection papers after the discussion may also help them consolidate the emotional and cognitive capacities involved in thinking dialectically.

Intentional Dialogue

Designed by Access Mindfulness, Elizabeth Nielson, and Harville Hendrix

From the tool: The purpose of this guide to Intentional Dialogue is to achieve understanding, not agreement. Being understood is priceless and the benefits bountiful. Intentional Dialogue is a structured way to mindfully communicate about difficult issues. Its purpose is to create emotional safety, which will deepen connection and significantly increase the ability of the listener to listen and the person sharing to practice nonharming speech. By taking turns to respectfully hear each other with open ears and an open heart, you can get out of the typical power struggle (someone is right or wrong). Instead, the goal is to respect each other's different viewpoints. This structured yet conscious way of speaking can have endless positive effects on improving the communication in your relationships, organization, and leadership. The following practices were designed for use within the container of a supportive therapeutic relationship but can be adapted for a variety of other settings, including the classroom.

[Intentional Dialogue](#) is also available on the Heterodox Academy website.

Intentional Dialogue Guide

The purpose of Intentional Dialogue, developed by Harville Hendrix, is to achieve understanding, not agreement. Being understood is priceless and the benefits bountiful. Intentional Dialogue is a structured way to mindfully communicate about difficult issues. Its purpose is to create emotional safety, which will deepen connection and significantly increase the ability of the listener to listen and the person sharing to practice non-harming speech. By taking turns to respectfully hear each other with open ears and an open heart, one can avoid the typical power struggle (someone is right or wrong). Instead, the goal is to respect each other's different viewpoints. This structured yet conscious way of speaking can have endless positive effects on improving the communication in your relationships, organization, and leadership. The following practices were designed for use within the container of a supportive therapeutic relationship, but can be adapted for a variety of other settings including the classroom.

Mechanics of Mirroring

Mirroring teaches you how to speak and listen well in order to create safety and connection in the space between you and your conversation partner. Your conversation partner is longing for you to hear them and accept them without judgment or criticism. The sentence stems in the Mirroring process help provide safety, structure and predictability in your communication. They allow you to slow down the inner chatter and to listen and share with your partner in a connecting way.

Making an Appointment

Honoring boundaries is essential in a mindful conversation. Your partner may not be ready to have a conversation the moment you request an appointment. It is okay to delay. Set a time to talk as soon as possible, when you and your partner are both available. Then show up at precisely that time. Be respectful of the need for sharing and being available for listening. You can also establish availability and permission to proceed with a conversation or offer a suggestion:

- I'd like to hear more about that and I am available to listen to you. Tell me more.
- I have something I want to share with you; Is it OK with you if I make a suggestion? I want to clarify; Are you available to listen to me? It would be helpful if you could reflect what I am saying. I find that very helpful.

Checking for Accuracy: “Let me see if I got that”

Research shows that the rate of accuracy while listening hovers around 13% for most of us, even when we are relaxed and focused. That means an 87% distortion rate. Checking for accuracy ensures that the Sender feels heard.

Those who know how to reflectively listen will recognize this step. Basically you mirror or reflect back, as clearly and simply as you can, what the other person is saying. Hendrix suggests you mirror as “flatly” as possible. As much as possible, mirror back what is being said without distortion. Resist the tendency to explain, justify, defend, attack, or solve problems. You are just mirroring back what the other person has said in your own words.

Some useful lead-in phrases:

- Did I get that right?
- So you...
- It sounds like you...
- So when...you...

Validation: “You and what you’re saying are valuable”

You might not utter those actual words, but validation is the process of letting the other person know that what they have said to you is valued. The difficulty in this step is that sometimes you may not agree with what the other person is saying. The beauty of this process is that you don’t have to agree with them to be effective. Use phrases that are honest and validating.

Some useful lead-in phrases:

- Given what you have gone through, what you are saying makes sense.
- From your viewpoint, I can see that there is some logic in what you are saying.
- Now that I have heard more of your feelings, I’m starting to understand this.

Showing Curiosity: “I want to learn more about that”

This question expresses curiosity and is an important component of safety and connecting. As you reassure the speaker that you are open to what they are saying, you begin a wonderful journey into their world. You experience connection, even if you find the subject area challenging or more familiar.

Some useful lead-in phrases:

- What was that like for you?
- Are there other times you've experienced that?
- How does it feel when you talk about it now?
- What did you do? (Or, what will you do?)

Empathy: "I feel some of what you are feeling as well"

In this stage you explore and talk about how you can feel some response to what they are feeling. The focus is on talking about what the feelings are and how they are felt. (Both your feelings and theirs).

Some useful lead-in phrases:

- It looks like you are feeling...
- What is it like for you to feel so...
- That must be difficult for you to feel so...How does it affect your life?
- Listening to you closely, I'm feeling some of your pain.

Summarizing: "Let me see if I got all of that"

This allows the receiver to summarize briefly (in two or three sentences) what they heard.

- Here is what I heard...Have I left anything out?
- What else did you want to communicate?

Cautions and Challenges

Avoid agreeing or disagreeing — instead focus on understanding your conversation partner's experience.

Avoid uninvited problem solving — instead explore what the person has tried, what they think is best, what their ideas are. Elicit and trust your conversation partner's intuition.

If the impulse to talk about yourself or give advice arises, see if you can allow it to pass without acting on it.

Keep the process open by allowing for differences of opinion or courses of action other than what you would have chosen.

Creating Connection to Enable Deep Discussion

Designed by Deb Mashek

From the tool: To ready students to take the interpersonal risks of sharing diverse viewpoints, admitting the limits of their own knowledge, or expressing genuine curiosity about the experiences and perspectives of others, professors can dedicate an hour of class time to the goal of facilitating interpersonal connection among their students. This activity, based on experimental social psychological research, offers an effective approach for doing so.

[Creating Connection to Enable Deep Discussion](#) is also available on the Heterodox Academy website.

Creating Connection to Enable Deep Discussion

Steven Covey's cult classic *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* advises: "seek first to understand, then to be understood." To know and to be known are core to who we are as teachers, learners, and colleagues. These processes of understanding and being understood rely on a foundation of interpersonal connection.

While interpersonal connection comes easily to some and is facilitated in some situations more than others, it can be difficult for students to cultivate interpersonal connection — or closeness — in classroom settings that can feel both anonymous and transitory.

In such cases, it can be near impossible to convince students to take the interpersonal risks of sharing diverse viewpoints, admitting the limits of their own knowledge, or expressing genuine curiosity about the experiences and perspectives of others.

Fear not: Social psychology can help. To ready students for the interpersonal tasks of knowing and being known, professors can dedicate an hour of class time to the goal of facilitating interpersonal connection among their students. The activity below, based on Arthur Aron and colleagues' experimental study, offers an effective approach.

Step 1. Prepare copies of the accompanying handout for your class.

Step 2. Randomly assign students into pairs. Or, provide students the opportunity to share via a questionnaire their attitudes and beliefs about social and political issues before this session. Then, pair students together who hold divergent views on potentially controversial topics.

Step 3. Give the students roughly 45 minutes to complete the reciprocal self-disclosure activity described in the handout.

Step 4. Reconvene the students for a short discussion about their experience. Suggested discussion questions include:

- What did you notice about the types of questions included here? How were these question sets organized? *Key insights: progressively riskier, ask about core aspects of the self.*

- What types of things did you and/or your interaction partner say or do that made you feel close? *Key insights: eye contact, asked follow-up questions, nodded when I shared, shared about themselves, expressed concern.*
- Did you learn something about this person you don't already know about your best friend? A close family member? *Fun fact: Aron et al (1997) found this short, experimental task resulted in participants feeling closer to their interaction partner — a total stranger — than the typical closest relationship of 30% of similar students.*
- What do you think the question at the beginning and end of the handout intends to measure? *[Answer: This is the Inclusion of Other in Self Scale. It is a single item pictorial measure of closeness. Although simple, it correlates with much more complex scales of feeling and behaving close and also predicts behaviors associated with closeness, such as sharing resources and taking the other person's perspective.]*
- What features of this activity do you think might promote the interpersonal connection? *Key insights: reciprocal, escalating, self-revealing.*
- What ideas do you have for exporting these features into your daily interactions? *Examples: Ask these questions of friends and family, try asking them of strangers instead of engaging in small talk, share aspects of yourself as a way of inviting others to do the same.*

Citations

- Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale and the structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 596-612.
- Aron, A., Melinat, E., Aron, E. N., Vallone, R. D., & Bator, R. J. (1997). The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness: A Procedure and Some Preliminary Findings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(4), 363–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167297234003>.

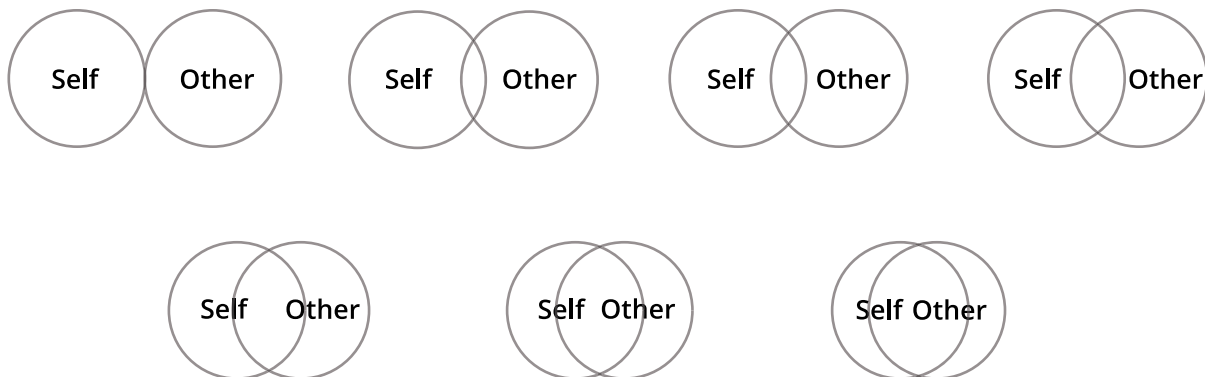
Creating Connection to Enable Deep Discussion Handout

Instructions

Pair up with the person with whom you have been randomly assigned to participate. Complete the pre-interaction question on the next page on your own. Then, find a cozy spot to engage in a conversation about the three question sets below. Spend 15 minutes on each question set. While working through a particular question set, take turns selecting the question. One person should read the question aloud, then both of you answer the question before moving on to your pair's next selection. Keep an eye on the time; move on to the second question set after about 15 minutes and then move to the third question set 15 minutes later. Before returning to the classroom, individually complete the post-interaction question. Please make sure to return to the classroom at the agreed upon time for a group discussion about this experience.

Answer this question before you begin:

Which picture below best describes your relationship with your interaction partner?



Question Set 1

- Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
- Would you like to be famous? In what way?
- Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?

- What would constitute a “perfect” day for you?
- When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
- If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
- Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?
- Name three things you and your partner appear to have in common.
- For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
- If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
- Take four minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible.
- If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

Question Set 2

- If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?
- Is there something that you’ve dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven’t you done it?
- What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
- What do you value most in a friendship?
- What is your most treasured memory?
- What is your most terrible memory?
- If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?
- What does friendship mean to you?
- What roles do love and affection play in your life?
- Alternate sharing a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items each.
- How close and warm is your family? Do you feel your childhood was happier than most?
- How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

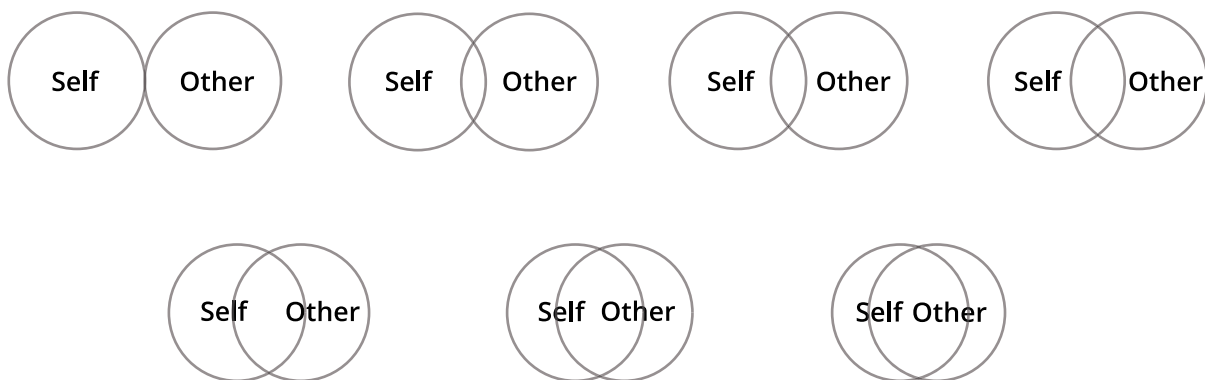
Question Set 3

- Make three true “we” statements each. For instance, “We are both in this room feeling ...”
- Complete this sentence: “I wish I had someone with whom I could share ...”

- If you were going to become a close friend with your partner, please share what would be important for him or her to know.
- Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.
- Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.
- When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?
- Tell your partner something that you like about them already.
- What, if anything, is too serious to be joked about?
- If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?
- Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
- Of all the people in your family, whose death would you find most disturbing? Why?
- Share a personal problem and ask your partner's advice on how they might handle it. Ask your partner to reflect back to you how you seem to feel about the problem you have chosen.

Answer this question before you begin:

Which picture below best describes your relationship with your interaction partner?



Further Resources for Lowering the Heat and Confronting Cancellation

Many of the recommendations in this Guide assume we are in control of our environments or able to prepare and strategize for action — and quite often this is the case. Unexpected encounters and swiftly developing events, however, can arise anytime, and knowing how to respond can be critical for protecting oneself, one's labor, and ongoing relationships.

Heterodox Academy hosts an extensive library of tools and resources designed by members, friends, and allies for exactly these situations. This guide incorporates several of the tools users have found to be most effective for responding to tense situations, attempted canceling, and more. We encourage readers to review these tools, practice the relevant skills, and remain vigilant for yourself and others.

When Cancel Culture Comes for You

Developed by HxA Staff

From the tool: In recent years we have seen a sharp rise in public denunciations of professors. Denouncements are predicated on the censure of someone's purported views or positions. Such calls are antithetical to open inquiry and viewpoint diversity. This guide offers some suggestions for how the different parties concerned — faculty who are targeted, colleagues of those under attack, and administrators being pressured by denouncers to take swift action — can navigate attempts to silence and condemn someone. To be clear, HxA recognizes that changes in employment are not always retaliatory. Such decisions are almost always confidential. Hence what we present here are suggestions in the service of protecting academic freedom and furthering free inquiry.

[When Cancel Culture Comes for You](#) is also available on the Heterodox Academy website.

When Cancel Culture Comes for You

In recent years we have seen a sharp rise in public denunciations of professors. These calls to condemn, censure, or even fire professors, while couched in the language of accountability, should not be confused with demands for those in power to take responsibility for their actions. Denouncements are categorically different — they are predicated on the censure of someone's purported views or positions. Such calls are antithetical to open inquiry and viewpoint diversity.

We offer some suggestions for how the different parties concerned — faculty who are targeted, colleagues of those under attack, and administrators being pressured by denouncers to take swift action — can navigate attempts to silence and condemn someone.

Often, public denouncements have resulted in serious personal and professional consequences, including termination and employment status changes. To be clear, we recognize that changes in employment are not always retaliatory. Such decisions are almost always confidential, and those on the outside rarely have full information about the reasons for changing employment statuses. Even the parties directly involved, including the employee and employer, are rarely able to speak publicly on the matter. Hence what we present here are suggestions in the service of protecting academic freedom and furthering free inquiry.

Part I: Advice for When You are Under Attack

We must make two disclaimers. First, context matters a lot. The ideas presented are suggestions that may not make sense given your institution's employment status and protections. Choose what you think will be useful in your context.

Second, this article's information is provided for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice on any subject. You should not act or refrain from acting based on any information provided by this article without seeking legal advice from your attorney regarding any particular legal matter. The views expressed here are those of the authors of this text and the people interviewed, none of whom are attorneys, and who are writing in their individual capacities only. Organizations like FIRE and the AAUP are well equipped to actively support and defend the individual rights of faculty at colleges and universities. We recommend seeking advice from them or from your own attorney if you find yourself in the unfortunate situation of being unfairly targeted.

Learning and scholarship require risk-taking in good faith. We ask questions, share ideas, challenge ideas, and — often — get it wrong. Especially within the current climate on campus and beyond, the stakes are high for taking intellectual risks, particularly for expressing views that challenge popular ideas and beliefs. The perceived transgressions run the gamut from a paper written years ago that used a word that now has a different connotation, an email you sent to a listserv last semester that raised a concern, a question you raised at last week's faculty meeting that others see as an act of violence, or a social media post you merely "liked" yesterday.

The typical blow-up goes something like this: Someone on Twitter calls something you said a transgression, a crowd piles on, the comments get nastier, perhaps someone suggests that people call your employer to get you fired.

While supportive colleagues may email you privately to share words of encouragement, the fear of guilt by association may undermine their willingness to stand up and support you publicly, lest they become the next target. Meanwhile, the accelerant of social media makes it easy for bullies to pile on. And the ethos of "silence is violence" compels them to do so quickly, often absent full information and with no accountability for the outcomes of their actions.

If the mob comes for you, you'll likely find it to be an intensely painful, scary, and lonely experience. The situation will likely come out of the blue; you won't necessarily even know you were at risk of offending others, a complication amplified by always shifting lines about what some undisclosed entity deems appropriate or not. Then, there's the fact that our world is home to millions of people with their unique views and sensitivities, and several have enough social media clout to launch a cancellation. Here's a horror-inducing reality: Unless you never say anything anywhere at all, you may offend someone who will launch an attack on you.

You might first receive an email or direct message on a social media account alerting you to your transgression. A friend or colleague might inform you that someone is after you. Or perhaps the instigator will give you a heads up that they are going to "make you famous." They'll perhaps recruit helpers by asserting your guilt and providing a screenshot of the transgression. Your attackers may hunt high and low for every comment or idea you have ever shared that could be read in a negative light, regardless of context. Soon, you could face a wall of evidence demonstrating your persistent pattern of wrong thought.

As efforts mount, you'll receive a storm of one-liners calling you names, asserting your idiocy and poor moral character, and calling for your job. (If you're lucky, you could also receive a few reasoned critiques about a position you shared; count those as treasures.) Someone may take the time to locate — and

then decide it is ethical and reasonable to share — your personal phone number or home address on social media. They may contact your colleagues, collaborators, department chair, dean, and president, alerting them to your transgressions and also leveling immediate claims of the institution’s complacency in supporting you and your offensive ideas. The institution could face demands to fire you or denounce you. The attackers could threaten legal action and will say untrue things. They may have time on their hands to “meme-ify” images of you, knowing images are more likely to go viral than words alone. Your boss and colleagues, out of concern or fear for their own safety and well-being, may feel extreme pressure to respond quickly and in an unsettled state of mind.

The situation can escalate. Tongues will likely be razor-sharp. Emotions will run high. Uncertainty will be higher. At a moment when your own mental and emotional well-being are in the gutter, hundreds or thousands (it will feel like millions) of people will be demanding swift and precise action from you. It can feel like there is no room for nuance, error, or grace. What should you do?

Preemptive Steps

As Benjamin Franklin noted, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Now is the time to take a preemptive look at your social media life.

- Consider what details you share in your social media profiles. The more information you provide, the easier it is for people to identify your colleagues and your employer, and the more likely it is people will contact them to denounce you or to call for your firing.
- Consider whether it is worth being on Twitter. People with high status, whether in real life or on social media, are prime targets for these attacks.
- If you do choose to be on Twitter, consider using an application like TweetDelete, which automatically deletes old tweets and “likes,” minimizing the likelihood that something you said at an earlier cultural moment can be taken out of context.
- Live your public life as though it is being recorded — because it is. Be kind and respectful to others, always take the high road, and say nothing on social media, in emails, or elsewhere that you cannot defend.
- Live your life in a way consistent with your personal values and that you’ll be able to look back on with pride.

- One expert suggests, “Do some prophylactics beforehand. Make it clear that you are a crusader for academic and First Amendment freedoms. That you support colleagues under fire. That you make it a professional purpose to fight against cancel culture. This makes you a porcupine for the mob.”
- Another said, “In my experience, one thing I’ve learned is that sometimes the problem actually is that people are insufficiently transparent about who they are and what they are trying to accomplish, what their motivations are, etc. Whenever there is a black box, it is left to the imagination of others to decide what it contains. Usually, these assumptions are uncharitable. I used to play things very close to the vest in terms of my personal motivations, background, etc. No more. It has done wonders.”

Now, if you’re in the unenviable position of being harassed, here are some steps you can take:

General Guidelines

- Comport yourself in a way consistent with your personal values. You want to be able to look back on your response to the attack with pride.
- Even though people will demand a swift response from you, you are under no obligation to respond swiftly or at all. Note that nothing you say is likely to please everyone, and everything you say is fodder for the attackers. Denouncers don’t get to decide the schedule on which you respond to them. The impetus to respond quickly, hoping to quell the rising tide of censure is more likely to backfire than to keep the wolves at bay.
- If you do respond, be firm and concise and be explicit that that is all you will say on the matter. It is better to respond in a single document you can take your time creating, rather than writing new responses to every single email or tweet. This way, you cannot be attacked for being inconsistent in your responses.
- Enlist others to stand up for you or vouch for you publicly (e.g., on social media) or with a private email to relevant decision-makers at your university. If appropriate, enlist alumni, substantial donors, or trustees. Their support can be invaluable.
- Assume everything you write to anyone will be shared publicly with others. This includes emails, text messages, direct messages, and even hand-written notes. People might send you friendly emails to lower your guard and then screenshot your response to mock you. Be careful whom you trust while you are vulnerable.

- Remember, a critic isn't the same thing as a bully. Some people will attack your ideas rather than attacking you. Ideally, you would invite them into a constructive conversation. But that's best done after some time has elapsed — perhaps next week or next month when the heat dies down.
- A colleague who lost his contract teaching position after a cancellation attempt suggests: "Take others' concerns and complaints seriously and engage with them in a serious and charitable way. Acknowledge whatever may be reasonable or right about their position, and then divert that down a more productive channel. Really try to see things from their side. If your response is just 'You're wrong. You're ignorant. Your position is stupid,' then it tends to polarize rather than de-escalate, and can create a zero-sum situation where one side is going to be decisively victorious, the other decisively defeated."

Words of Wisdom from Others Who Have Survived the Gauntlet

- "Like everything else in life, this too shall pass and your life will go on. When you find yourself in situations like this, it's easy to think that it will never end. But be reassured that things like this always stop; your life is definitely not over."
- "Be proud of yourself and your work. Recognize that you are climbing a mountain in a fierce storm. Climb carefully. But do not stop climbing. The view at the top will be wonderful."
- "Read the stoics, especially Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* e.g., "The tranquility that comes when you stop caring what they say. Or think, or do. Only what you do." Or read *The Stoic Challenge*, by William Irvine, for help turning this challenge into growth.

You probably had a thousand other things you were planning to do this week; accept that none of them will get done just now. Dealing with an attack will take every minute of your time and every ounce of your cognitive and emotional bandwidth, at least for a few days or perhaps weeks. The negative attention might come in waves as new developments arise (e.g., if your employer makes a public statement). But then it will just stop. Those denouncing you will move on to swarm the next target. And in time, you will likely be fine, more aware of your own resilience, more compassionate toward the flaws and foibles of others, and more confident in the quality of your friends.

Mental Health

- Seek social support. Contact your (real) friends; contact others who have been attacked; get support from a therapist, faith leader, or other confidantes.

- Note who is attacking you and who has your back. Which group of people knows you better and is in a better position to judge your character? Probably the latter. This situation will reveal the character of the people around you. You will likely be surprised in both directions: some people will disappoint, whom you would not have expected it from. Others will step up. Try to find peace of mind in seeing how people stand up for you.

Social Media

- Stay off of social media
- If you can't resist the urge to look to see what others are saying about you, have a confidante look at the posts and comments and give you a summary. Most importantly, resist the urge to respond or otherwise engage on social media.
- Ask a trusted friend to be the keeper of data: screenshot, record, or otherwise document everything as soon as it appears, so you will have a record of what happened if you ever need it. Consider freezing your social media accounts.

Dealing with Media

- One expert advises, "If you are not used to talking to journalists, it's probably best to decline any request to comment. If you accept to talk to journalists, ask to reply to their questions via email, and to see the article before it's published so that you can amend the bits that misrepresent your view."
- Contact your college's marketing and communications office to ask if there's a media coach or other advisor who can guide you on how to speak to reporters. Your college's communications department may also be able and willing to help you write a statement to help shut down the call-out attempt.
- Consider hiring your own media consultant (search the internet for "reputation management media consultants").
- If you speak to a journalist on the phone or via video chat, record your call so you can prove that you didn't say the things they may mistakenly attribute to you.
- In general, when talking to journalists, use sentences that can stand alone. Don't say anything that would require much further explanation or several caveats. Each sentence should

represent your views accurately, or else it can be taken out of context and used against you. Write down a few short sound bites that capture your position before the interview.

Communications with Your Employer

- Different people on campus have different levels of protection. Faculty who are neither tenured nor on the tenure track usually have thin protections. Consider contacting FIRE, AAUP, or other organizations who can help protect your job.
- Advise your employer when it becomes apparent that a mob is after you. This gives your employer more time to prepare for their future involvement in the incident and minimizes the shock for them. The university communications team will generally advise you to be silent, as this makes it easier for them to contain negative PR for the institution. You don't want to be needlessly confrontational, nor throw fuel on a fire. You want to show that you're someone who is a team player. But you also have to understand that the core interest of many administrators in these instances is seeking positive press or making bad press go away (alongside handling complaints from donors, trustees, alumni, and other stakeholders).
- If your employer is feeling pressure to react, encourage them to release a statement saying this matter requires attention and they are taking time to look into it. This should minimize the pressure for them to act too quickly in the heat of the moment. (See also Section 3: Advice to Administrators.)
- If you are called into a meeting with your dean, provost, or other administrator, have an ombudsperson in the room to help advocate for due process and to track details that may be overwhelming. If you have a reason not to trust your ombudsperson, ask to have an alternate in the room for you.
- Review your school's mission, values, employment handbook, commitment to academic freedom, etc. This will allow you to prepare questions for decision-makers about how any processes or decisions align with stated values.
- If your employer takes action that violates your First Amendment rights, contact the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) or another civil liberties advocacy organization for support.
- You may need a lawyer; consider contacting one who specializes in employment law. Said one colleague, "Even a one-page letter from your lawyer to your university is worth the expense."

- Contact the leadership of your faculty union or other professional associations to ask about your rights and protections. Activate whatever support is available through those groups.

Email and Phone

- Assume your phone number and email are publicly available. People attacking you may try to contact you directly. If a flood of attacks comes in, ask a trusted advisor to screen emails and calls on your behalf.
- So you don't get cut off from your support network, you may wish to set up a temporary email address and/or Google phone number so you can be in contact with the people you want to reach.
- Keep your information secure from attack by changing passwords on email, social media, and other accounts.

Apologies: Don't Apologize Unless You are Clearly Wrong

While those we consulted generally agreed that [apologies don't work](#), they offered additional advice and nuance that might be helpful:

- Don't apologize. Don't say you've changed your mind about a topic unless you are 100% sure that you made a mistake. If you are forced to write an apology letter by your employer or editor, phrase it in a way that you don't apologize for writing something controversial, but rather for failing to communicate what you actually meant in a clearer way so that everyone, experts and non-experts, could easily understand what you meant." Said another colleague, "Never apologize for something that you did not do, or for which you do not feel an apology is warranted. Do not give false apologies. Save apologies for moments where you can, and should, offer a genuine one."
- "Never apologize unless you have made some grave mistake. Even then, correct your mistake and leave it at that. Cancel mobs smell blood... The moment they realize that you are not on the defensive, but on the offensive, that you cannot be bullied into silence but are emerging stronger than ever and swinging hard, they will be shown for the cowards they are; if you are scared, don't show publicly that you are scared."
- Think earnestly — do you have something to apologize for? If so, do so. Otherwise, do not."

Part II: Advice for When Your Colleagues Are Under Attack

When a colleague or friend comes under attack for doing or saying something that someone has deemed a transgression, you may feel complicated emotions. You might be offended by what your colleague did but nevertheless horrified by the lack of proportionality between the offense and the magnitude of the response. You might feel outrage at the absurdity and injustice of the charge.

But whatever the situation, you have a choice to make. On the one hand, you could sit back and let new information come in, believing you don't know enough to make a judgment or hoping things will sort themselves out eventually. But you know that your colleague — and likely their administrators — are under incredible pressure. We recommend taking action. Your friend or colleague is likely suffering a great deal of anxiety. Anything you do to reach out or help will be deeply appreciated. The stakes are particularly high right now; anyone could be next, whether it's for something said in class yesterday or for an op-ed published a decade ago.

Here are some things you can do:

- First, let your colleague know that you support them. Either contact them directly or bcc them on communication to their administrator articulating that your colleague is unfairly accused. If you contact your colleague directly, encourage them to resist the urge to instantly respond and to demonize the denouncers. Instead, urge them to be civil, reasonable, and principled in their response. This will underscore their virtues as a scholar.
- Whether in a thoughtful letter to the colleague's administrator, in a column written for the student paper, during a discussion at a faculty meeting, in hallway conversations with departmental colleagues, or on social media, stand on the side of intellectual humility, due process, and grace. If it appears that there might be some validity to the charges, this could look like: "Do we know both sides of the story?" or "Do we know all the facts?" or even "I am not an expert in this field so it is difficult for me to condemn that; do you know an expert we could consult?"
- A simple, powerful, and low-risk formulation for a statement from you on social media is, "This person is my friend, a good person, and I support him/her." Even if some people criticize you and try to tar you with guilt by association, far more people will admire you silently for your loyalty and courage.
- Remind students, peers, and administrators of core academic values — a reverence for big questions, competing hypotheses and analytical frames, academic freedom, and the inclusion

of diverse people and diverse ideas. Indeed, some of the most innovative and paradigm-shifting ideas in many fields have been good-faith challenges to established orthodoxies.

- State the obvious: that great minds don't always think alike, that all of us should be allowed to make mistakes and to change our minds, and that quality of evidence and mode of engagement matter in personal and professional discourse.
- Clarify what's at stake for individuals who are accused of transgressions, regardless of their guilt or innocence — reputation, professional livelihood, dignity, well-being. Sometimes people need to be reminded of the bigger picture.
- Make visible the dynamics of the onslaught — attackers are very vocal; they often exchange incomplete information with certainty, and individuals with a large number of followers can call for swift, specific action. People who target others act quickly and with force, giving the (often false) impression of consensus and of large numbers of supporters.
- Caution decision-makers against rapid reaction. Encourage them to collect good information, to take the time to fully understand the nuances of the situation, even when doing the right thing and doing the easy thing don't align. Administrators are under a lot of pressure in such instances and your intervention may embolden them to respond thoughtfully. Remind them of the positive principles the school is supposed to embody.
- Send decision-makers this guide and point them to Part III for administrators.
- Advise decision-makers not to cave to bullies. Tell them that unlike good-faith critics, who are more likely to be interested in discovering the truth, even if it turns out that they were wrong, bullies are inflexible and sound a single note, which is often ideological.
- Encourage administrators to be transparent and principled in their responses. Remind them this will help engender greater trust between the faculty and administration more broadly.
- Behave in a way consistent with your personal values and that you'll be able to look back on with pride. Don't shame. Don't denounce. Don't use the illegitimate tactics of the attackers against them. Model your own principles — the principles you want others to live up to.

Anyone could be the next target. While self-preservation might compel you to seek permanent residency in an undisclosed cave, doing so would have dire consequences for the creation of knowledge and pursuing solutions to the complex challenges we face. Every time the mob succeeds — because others are too scared to speak up — it incentivizes and strengthens their behavior. Instead, with persistent courage and conviction, we must stand up for our colleagues' right to be wrong, to ask challenging questions, and to take the genuine risks inherent in navigating complicated terrain.

Part III: Advice for Administrators

When a faculty member comes under attack for doing or saying something that someone has deemed a transgression, you may be called upon by strangers on social media or students on your campus — often supported by some of your faculty — to take swift action to condemn, discipline, suspend, or even terminate the faculty member’s contract.

When this happens, bear in mind that often “transgressions” occur when scholars are acting in good faith within their role as a teacher or scholar, roles that involve intellectual risk-taking and challenging popular ideas and beliefs.

As executive administrators, you play a critical role in creating and maintaining campus cultures where core features of learning and discovery such as open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and academic freedom thrive. The community on campus and beyond look to you to articulate philosophies, make policies, and implement practices. Your words and deeds inform the culture of your institution, so your response to calls for canceling someone must be well-considered and true to your own values and those of your institution.

Here are some things you can do:

- Slow down. Do not feel the need to respond immediately. Take some time to collect good information and understand the nuances. Prepare to take one on the chin when doing the right thing and doing the easy thing don’t align. You will likely be under a lot of pressure in such instances, which is why what you say and do is very important.
- Giving the attackers what they want may seem like it will make them and any bad press go away, but it won’t. The attackers often escalate their demands, and there could be a lot of bad press for a long time if you seem to bow to pressure. Often, when administrators have said no to unreasonable demands, attackers back off and moved on to another target. Also, remember that your decision can have consequences for someone’s livelihood, reputation and career. Take the time to look into the matter carefully.
- If you do feel you absolutely must have an immediate response, release a statement saying this matter requires attention and that you are taking time to look into it carefully. Stress the positive principles the school is supposed to embody and say that whatever decision you make will be in line with the values of your institution.

- Meet with the faculty member and let them know that you are not jumping to any conclusions. Get their side of the story. Offer to have an ombudsperson in the room to signal you are committed to due process. This will help the concerned faculty member feel more comfortable talking to you. Reassure them you will not take any rash action.
- Hold firm and do not cave to bullies. Unlike good-faith critics, who are more likely to be interested in discovering the truth, even if it turns out that they were wrong, bullies are inflexible and sound a single note, which is often ideological. It is important for them to hear from you that you stand by the principles of open inquiry and academic freedom.
- If students on your campus are calling for action, invite them for a conversation. Listen to their concerns and remember that your role as an educator is to help them understand the complexity and nuance of the situation. Remind them that open inquiry is the mission of higher education and stress that academic freedom is a prerequisite for achieving that goal. Impress upon them that as a community, everyone must remain true to and act in accordance with the institution's sacred core, its telos. If there are instances in the history of your institution that help shed light on what is the right response, invoke it.
- Whatever you decide, be sure you are not violating the faculty member's rights. We recommend reviewing your university's faculty handbook and AAUP guidelines about the academic freedom of faculty and faculty rights in the classroom.
- Be transparent and principled in your response. Communicate regularly with the faculty. This will help engender greater trust between the faculty and administration more broadly.
- Behave in a way consistent with your personal values and that you'll be able to look back on with pride. Don't shame. Don't denounce. Don't use the illegitimate tactics of the attackers against them. Model your own principles — the principles you want others to live up to.

Proactive Steps You Can Take Before a Crisis Arises

Heightened political polarization and social media's "economy of prestige" that supports the toxic new "callout culture" make your job as an executive administrator especially difficult. The stakes are particularly high right now; anyone could be next, whether for something said in class yesterday or for an op-ed published a decade ago. Proactive investment in articulating and centering the values of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement can help foster positive campus culture and decrease the need for reactive responses. To lead from the front on these issues and to equip our learning communities with the habits of heart and mind that support constructive engagement across

lines of difference, you need to remind the campus of your mission and values. Make the case publicly and regularly — not just when tensions are high or when there is a blow-up — that viewpoint diversity and open inquiry are essential to achieving these aspirational goals.

Here are a few things you can do:

- Establish open inquiry and viewpoint diversity as values within existing programs, committees, and ongoing conversations. Point out that it is the role of executive administrators to ensure that students are exposed to many viewpoints.
- Weave in the centrality of these values when you welcome new faculty and new students.
- Use discretionary funds to bring programming around these issues to campus and be explicit about why you are doing so.
- Select open inquiry as a theme for the next accreditation review.
- Suggest open inquiry as a theme for retreats, faculty meetings, student meetings; suggest doing a “year of open inquiry” or “year of viewpoint diversity” campaign.
- Embed your institution’s commitment to these principles in position descriptions for faculty and staff hires.
- Encourage faculty to include language around these principles in their syllabi.
- With a mind to lead from the front on the issue of faculty harassment, consider investing time and resources in developing a guidebook for your campus that centers your institution’s commitment to faculty members’ right to free expression and outlines how the campus community should deal with such situations. Executive administrators at the University of Iowa and Penn State have produced social media support and resource guides which advise faculty, junior and senior administrators, and staff on how to navigate social media attempts to silence scholars (these can be found [here](#) and [here](#)). You can use these as inspiration for handbooks adapted to your context.

How to Navigate Moral Disagreements

Adapted by Daniel Koas

From the tool: Despite assumptions to the contrary, people are not fundamentally rational. Research shows that when disagreements arise, appeals to rational standards, facts, or statistics can often polarize people more. When people feel threatened or cornered by the evidence, rather than conceding, they often kick debates into the moral sphere, where claims become much more difficult to falsify. In these instances, empirical evidence not only loses most of its force, but even arguments appealing to rivals' own perceived interests can backfire.

These strategies summarize how to approach moral disagreements in constructive ways. Readers who wish to help their students engage in open inquiry and constructive disagreement can use these strategies to build mutual understanding and have better conversations on difficult issues.

[How to Navigate Moral Disagreements](#) is also available on the Heterodox Academy website.

How to Navigate Moral Disagreements

Despite assumptions to the contrary, people are not fundamentally rational. Research shows that when disagreements arise, appeals to rational standards, facts, or statistics can often polarize people more. When people feel threatened or cornered by the evidence, rather than conceding, they often kick debates into the moral sphere, where claims become much more difficult to falsify. In these instances, empirical evidence not only loses most of its force, but even arguments appealing to rivals' own perceived interests can backfire.

The strategies below summarize how to approach moral disagreements in constructive ways. HxA members and other heterodox enthusiasts who wish to help their students engage in open inquiry and constructive disagreement can use these strategies to build mutual understanding and have better conversations on difficult issues.

Lower the perceived state of the disagreement or conflict

The more people see as “riding on” their being right, the less they will be willing to change. The first thing to do if you want to avoid having a conflict escalate into the moral sphere is to lower the costs of your opponent admitting that they may be wrong or that you might be right. There are a few aspects to this:

Don't sling pejorative labels or assign bad motives

Someone need not be a bad, sexist, racist, ignorant, stupid, brainwashed, or crazy person to disagree with you. Given how complicated and uncertain many issues are, there is room for reasonable disagreement on virtually any topic. When the insinuation or allegation that the source of the dispute is some negative attribute the other person has, the conversation is unlikely to be productive.

When people sling labels, they are also setting a high reputational cost for agreement. When the disagreement is not about the facts, it's about the other person, how they see themselves, and how they are seen by others. To elevate the conversation, criticize positions rather than people.

Agree upon facts first

Often, we lump facts together with implications and applications; for example, “because climate change is real, we have to have strict regulations.” It is unwise to argue in this way; if the extent to which people

contribute to climate change was already controversial to the person you are arguing with, and then they think accepting climate change is real also means they also have to accept massive government interventions – that’s going to be a much tougher sell. To stick with this example: first, work towards an agreement about factual details (like the reality of climate change, the extent to which people are driving it, etc.). Then talk about what to do about it or how best to address it. Start small and build out.

Lower a disagreement’s visibility

In public environments, including digital forums, there is much more pressure to conform to one’s group and to virtue signal. It is also far more embarrassing to admit you were wrong to the whole world than to a single person. People are generally much more reasonable in more intimate settings. Therefore, one way to lower the stakes of a debate is to decrease its visibility. This can also help reduce the possibility of mob effects (and prevent derailments by others jumping into the conversation).

Don’t demand too much from the conversation

People often go into conversations with unrealistic expectations of what can or will be achieved. There is an expectation that one side will be converted to the other’s way of thinking, or that they’ll both be swayed and meet somewhere in the middle. This creates needless pressure.

In cases of deep disagreement, the initial and primary goal should be simply to clearly understand where the other is coming from and to be well-understood oneself. It is often a major accomplishment just to walk away from a conversation knowing concretely those on the ‘other side’ of an issue are not necessarily stupid, crazy, ignorant, or evil and there can be morally and intellectually defensible disagreement on the matter.

Appeal to identity, values, narratives, and frames of reference

Speak to people in their own language

Research shows that people become much more willing to reconsider or even change their views and to accept controversial facts when presented to them in terms of their own values, commitments, and frames of reference. If you want someone to consider your empirical claims, it’s a lot easier to be convincing if you cede the “home court” advantage. Otherwise, one thing you may be arguing about, besides the facts, is the framing.

For example, if you are a progressive talking to a conservative, try to explain why, as a conservative, they might find your position compelling. Additional research is likely required: If you want to engage conservatives' frames, you must learn conservative views about the matter. What are the arguments they deploy against your position? Is there anything you can find to agree with, or things you hadn't considered that now seem pretty important? These can be great starting points for building zones of agreement.

Understand that it's worth the effort

The steps outlined here may sound demanding and intimidating — but the challenge is worth it. If you do a deep dive into a radically alternative worldview with an open mind – that mind will be blown. The exploration might, at times, be disorienting, frustrating, or triggering – but you will learn a lot. You might not abandon your own commitments, but you'll definitely come to see things in a dramatically different way. At the very least, you will discover that your rivals have legitimate reasons for holding the positions they hold on many issues. That in itself – really internalizing that – can be huge.

Lead by Example: Model Civility, Flexibility, Intellectual Humility, and Good Faith.

Follow the Golden Rule to engage in good faith

Both parties should be alive to the possibility they may be wrong – in part or even in full – and both parties should enter prepared to change their minds. It is unreasonable for you to expect or demand they change their mind in response to arguments if you are not sincerely prepared to do the same.

A good exercise to ask yourself sometimes is, “why do I believe this? What would cause me to change my view on this? What don't I know about this topic that might be important?” If you don't think there is anything that can cause you to change your position on a topic, this is a sign you might not be engaging in good faith.

Don't let your emotions get the best of you

Although emotions often do convey important information, they frequently mislead as well. Sometimes our initial emotional reaction is not the right one — as becomes clear with a little time and distance. Often our reactions result from us hearing what we want to hear, or otherwise misperceiving or misinterpreting a claim. Remember this when in a difficult conversation.

In the heat of the moment, people can also use clumsy language that could (and otherwise would) be more careful or precise — but which need not derail a conversation. Asking “what do you mean by that?” or “why do you say that?” can often go a long way towards clearing up misunderstanding or defusing an initial threat response.

If people are intentionally trying to get ‘under someone’s skin’ or put them off balance, it is especially important to be attentive to — and in control of — your emotions. Don’t take the bait! Keep focused on what matters and try to steer the conversation in a more productive direction. If this is not possible and the other person seems committed to engaging in bad faith, consider disengaging.

General Bibliography

This bibliography is the first of its kind: a comprehensive overview of key research, findings, and leading thought in the developing fields of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement. It encompasses a range of studies and fresh insights organized by our guiding principles for easy navigation. These are followed by additional entries featuring context, history, and theory around cultural change in higher education. This bibliography is at once robust and incomplete: Readers are invited to notice gaps in the literature and seek to remedy them with new research and thought.

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Recommendations Listed by Area and Endnotes

Recommendations Listed by Area

Institutional Affairs

Presidents (pp. 20–24)

- Be “curator in chief” of intellectual diversity on campus.
- Be a fierce protector of academic freedom, basic safety, and campus well-being.
- Build an administration that supports intellectual inquiry.
- Represent and convey campus values to external stakeholders and the community.

Institutional Data and Measurement (pp. 25–30)

- Establish governance and intellectually diverse processes that closely connect institutional data collection with internal policies and practices.
- Be a fierce protector of academic freedom, basic safety, and campus well-being.
- Build an administration that supports intellectual inquiry.
- Represent and convey campus values to external stakeholders and the community.

Employee Practice (pp. 31–35)

- Position your institution as an employer-of-choice through employment branding.
- Include more than the traditional gathering of documents in the application process.
- Make employees aware of company policies and expectations at the start of the relationship between an employee and the employer as part of effective employee orientation.
- Align training and development activities to the institution’s mission, vision, and values to ensure the focus is on more than just obtaining knowledge.
- Allow for periodic consideration of employee job performance against a predetermined set of organizational expectations and individually articulated goals.

Admissions (pp. 36–39)

- Consider a broad set of diversity variables when recruiting and considering prospective students.
- Think “slowly” about students.
- Be wary of stereotypes throughout the admissions process.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Campus Expression (pp. 40–43)

- Turn to institutional values to set expectations regarding free expression and diversity, equity, and inclusion for the campus community.
- Develop and engage strategies that institutionalize free expression and diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental to the academic experience for every member of the academic community.
- Support the use of campus spaces to demonstrate constructive disagreement.
- Develop relationships and opportunities with a variety of community partners.

Student Affairs

Campus Environment (pp. 46–49)

- Develop interdisciplinary courses designed to explore contemporary issues.
- Explore, practice, and apply intentional empathy when working with campus constituents to build trust and model meaningful engagement and problem-solving for students.

Student Practice (pp. 50–54)

- Help students understand the unique role of universities in America.
- Educate students on expression policies.
- Be mindful of students' developmental needs.
- Acknowledge the harm students experience.
- Empower students to act where they can.
- Focus on engaging students inclined to be open to new perspectives.
- Facilitate intentional opportunities for dialogue.

Student Groups (pp. 55–58)

- Create opportunities for 21st-century skill development through extracurricular and cocurricular programming.
- Manage a student club or cocurricular program.

Student Government (pp. 59–62)

- Increase student engagement with the student union.
- Increase student participation in student governance.

- Work with alumni affairs to connect students with alumni who can serve as mentors for practicing heterodox values.
- Create a volunteering program with a cocurricular credit.

Academic Affairs

Intellectual Life (pp. 65–70)

- Identify blind spots in a discipline and address them.
- Ensure there is a diverse range of rigorously practiced views when curating research teams, journal issues, conferences, and so forth.
- Write in a way that will convey heterodox perspectives effectively.

Global Curriculum (pp. 71–74)

- Use course designations and skill/area requirements to define constructive disagreement and open inquiry as valuable, learnable practices.
- Use departmental learning goals to foster open inquiry and curiosity toward differing perspectives.
- Use multisection and course sequence learning goals to foster open inquiry and curiosity toward varying viewpoints.

Classroom Approaches (pp. 75–83)

- Include policies in the syllabus that cultivate constructive disagreement.
- Learn how to lower the heat during challenging moments.
- Create space during class for questions and discussion.
- Promote winsome disruption in class.
- Seek diverse community opportunities to showcase classroom learning in practice.
- Follow Bloom's Taxonomy to develop course assessments.
- Draw on a diverse range of evaluative practices to design course assessments.
- Model what is expected of students to accomplish.

Faculty and Staff Professional Development (pp. 84–92)

- Build a digital resource library that supports faculty and graduate student teaching and writing around intellectual diversity and disagreement.
- Incorporate values of intellectual diversity and constructive disagreement into training for teaching assistants.

- Ensure nonfaculty professional staff receive ample training and support for encouraging intellectual diversity.
- Create awards for instructors who exhibit and instill intellectual diversity in their work.
- Offer workshops that familiarize faculty with classroom approaches to constructive disagreement and viewpoint diversity.
- Similar to workshops, support faculty communities of practice around open inquiry and viewpoint diversity.
- Reinforce intellectual diversity and constructive disagreement in tenure and promotion.

Endnotes

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Amendment Issues. <https://knightfoundation.org/reports/free-expression-on-campus-what-college-students-think-about-first-amendment-issues/>.

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16. [NobelPrize.org](https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2002/kahneman/facts/). Daniel Kahneman–Facts. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2002/kahneman/facts/>. Richard Thaler–Facts. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2017/thaler/facts/>. The prize commonly referred to as the Nobel Prize in Economics is technically called the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, as economics was not one of the original Nobel Prize categories.

17. Recent examples of books, among many, are Steven Pinker's *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (Penguin, 2018; finalist for the Pulitzer Prize), Jordan Peterson's *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* (Penguin Random House, 2018), Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt's *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure* (Penguin, 2018), Pluckrose et al.'s *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything About Race, Gender, and Identity — and Why This Harms Everybody* (Pitchstone, 2020), and Michael Shellenberger's *Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All* (Harper, 2020). Two examples of podcasts include Bret Weinstein and Heather Heying's *DarkHorse* and Gad Saad's *The Sad Truth*. Recent think tanks include the Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology (CSPI, founded by Richard Hanania) and Persuasion (founded by Yascha Mounk). Finally, Jordan Peterson and Sam Harris are two examples of “heterodox” public intellectuals who have recently headlined lucrative speaking tours.

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25. Access HxA Tools & Resources Library here: <https://heterodoxacademy.org/tools-and-resources/>. Access Constructive Dialogue Institute (formerly OpenMind) here: <https://constructivedialogue.org/>.

About Heterodox Academy

Heterodox Academy is a nonpartisan nonprofit that works to improve the quality of research and education by promoting open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement in institutions of higher learning. Our community is made up of more than 5,000 professors, educators, administrators, and students who come from a range of institutions — from large research universities to community colleges. They represent nearly every discipline and are distributed throughout 49 states and across the globe.



great minds don't
always think alike