Difficult Dialogues at the University of Nebraska-Omaha
Scott Conference Center, August 20, 2007

Core Group Refresher

AGENDA

8:30 a.m. ~ Check-in and Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. ~ Welcome & warm-up

9:15 a.m. ~ Looking Back, Looking Forward (Project Directors)
   • Brief summary of activities/outcomes for 2006-07
   • Planned activities/opportunities for 2007-08
     o Continue dialogue circles with modified purpose—discuss later in the day.
     o “By the People” dialogue on immigration (Sunday Oct 14)—guests will talk about
       this in detail this afternoon.
     o Time Capsule from the Spring 07 event to be implemented this year.
     o Dialogue training for students this fall.
     o Brown-bag presentations in MBSC to share what you’re doing.
     o Bob O’Neil visiting campus on Monday October 29.
   • Change of plans for Spring 2008 dialogue event. We hope to provide funding for multiple
     dialogues sponsored by student groups, faculty, and staff instead of just having one event
     (more on this later today).
   • Questions

9:45 a.m. ~ Honing Facilitation Skills: Enriching the Conversation

11:30 a.m. ~ Rapid Response

12:00 p.m. ~ Lunch/Table Talk about 06-07 projects

1:00 p.m. ~ 2007-08 Dialogue Events

3:00 p.m. ~ Improving and Reorganizing Dialogue Circles

3:30 p.m. ~ Conclusion and Adjourn/sign up for future email consultation with Stephen

3:30 ~ Individual and small-group consultations
Difficult Dialogues
Core Group Refresher
August 20, 2007

Facilitators’ Outline

8:30 a.m. ~ Check-in and Continental Breakfast
- Each participant fills out a brief reflection sheet to be used during today’s sessions.

9:00 a.m. ~ Welcome & warm-up
- Participants finish reflection sheet as needed.

9:15 a.m. ~ Looking Back, Looking Forward (Project Directors)
- Brief summary of activities/outcomes for 2006-07 (Nora)
- Planned activities/opportunities for 2007-08 (Shereen)
  - Continue dialogue circles with modified purpose – discuss later in the day.
  - “By the People” dialogue on immigration (Sunday Oct 14) – guests will talk about this in detail this afternoon.
  - Time Capsule from the Spring 07 event to be implemented this year.
  - Dialogue training for students this fall.
  - Brown-bag presentations in MBSC to share what you’re doing.
  - Bob O’Neil visiting campus on Monday October 29.
- Change of plans for the Spring 2008 dialogue event. We hope to provide funding for multiple dialogues sponsored by student groups, faculty, and staff instead of just having one event -- more on this later today. (Cynthia)
- Questions?

9:45 a.m. ~ Honing Facilitation Skills
1. Moving from easy/superficial to deeper/more difficult dialogue: An idea set
   The facilitator will distribute and discuss a handout on methods of deepening dialogue. Methods will include such items as (1) pre-contact with participants, (2) careful selection and framing of topics, (3) scoping (context setting), (4) setting ground rules and guidelines, (5) formats for achieving depth (e.g., study circles, staged dialogues, LARC, etc.), (6) use of the go-round, (7) using the power of stories, and (8) idea writing.

2. Discussion:
   Referring to the reflection sheet, participants in small groups will explore the questions related to what constitutes good dialogue. The discussion will continue in a large-group format.

11:30 a.m. ~ Rapid Response
- Large group discussion
  We will have a large group discussion of the question: What ideas do you have for a system to respond rapidly as issues arise in the community?

12:00 p.m. ~ Lunch/Table Talk about 06-07 projects
- Participants will discuss their 06-07 projects informally over lunch.
1:00 p.m. ~ 2007-08 Dialogue Events

1. Guests will tell participants about the “By the People” dialogue event and the need for facilitators.

2. We hope to make funding available for dialogues sponsored by student groups, faculty (e.g., service-learning), and staff. Focus must be on issues related to race, ethnicity, religion, and/or sexual orientation. Planning teams may (but need not) involve partnership with community groups. Explain the application process.

3. Using a three-stage process, participants will explore dialogue opportunities for the coming year:

   Stage 1: Individual brainstorming—Each person will generate a short list of ideas for possible dialogue events in the coming year and place these on large Post-It notes (3 per person).

   Stage 2: Group discussion—in groups participants will share their ideas, the group will discuss and cluster these, brainstorm additional ideas, and prepare one to three ideas to present to the large group, placing these on flip-chart pages. When prioritizing ideas, the group should consider the likelihood that the dialogue will really happen this year.

   Stage 3: Presentations and Reality Testing—Groups will present their ideas. After each presentation, participants will ask reality-testing questions and the facilitator will facilitate a large-group discussion of these questions.

3:00 p.m. ~ Improving and Reorganizing Dialogue Circles

- Project Directors suggest new purpose of the Dialogue Circles could be to provide opportunity to engage in dialogue and practice facilitation skills.

- Ideas for Dialogue Circle topics
  - Using an open space method, discussion groups will be formed.
  - Form new dialogue circles for 2007-08 and turn in form listing circle title and members.

3:30 p.m. ~ Conclusion and Adjourn/sign up for future email consultation with Stephen

- Participants complete short self-evaluation questionnaire.

3:30 ~ Individual and small-group consultations

- Stephen will meet with individuals and small groups as needed.
- Later email consultation will also be possible.
Attachment B: What Omaha Do You Live In? Talking Openly about Race and Identity

Poster

Agenda

Dialogue Handout

*Gateway* Article about “What Omaha Do You Live In?”
WHAT OMAHA DO YOU LIVE IN?

Talking Openly About Race and Identity
A Difficult Dialogues Project Event

COMMUNICATION about race and identity too often deteriorates into hostility or awkward silence. UNO students, faculty, staff, and administrators are invited to EXPERIENCE A DIFFERENT KIND OF CONVERSATION. Explore how race and identity shape our experiences in the UNO/Omaha community.

PARTICIPANTS are encouraged to bring an item representing their identity or experiences living in Omaha to CONTRIBUTE TO A TIME CAPSULE. After the event the time capsule will be displayed on the UNO campus.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2007

5:00 PM, Alice W. Campbell Student Center Ballroom - A Difficult Dialogues Project Event

Participation is limited. To register, write to undifcultdialogues@uno.unomaha.edu
## WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In dialogue we DO.</th>
<th>In dialogue we DON'T.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Try to understand.</td>
<td>Try to win.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value listening</td>
<td>Compete for speaking time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak mostly for ourselves.</td>
<td>Speak for others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak from personal experience.</td>
<td>Bring up the behavior of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an atmosphere of safety.</td>
<td>Create a potentially threatening and uncomfortable environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover differences even among those with whom we agree.</td>
<td>Take sides with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover shared concerns between ourselves and others.</td>
<td>Polarize ourselves from those with whom we disagree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover our uncertainties as well as deeply held beliefs.</td>
<td>Feel unswerving commitment to a point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions out of true curiosity and the desire to know more.</td>
<td>Ask questions to make a point or put the other person down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover significant new things.</td>
<td>Make predictable statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore the complexity of the issues being discussed.</td>
<td>Make simplistic statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate.</td>
<td>Compete.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Ground Rules for Dialogue

1. Talk about what’s really important to you.
2. Really listen to each other. See how thoroughly you can understand each person’s views & experience.
3. Say what’s true for you without making each other wrong.
4. See what you can learn by exploring things together.
5. Avoid monopolizing the conversation. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.
6. Suspend judgment and respect differences. Honor each person’s unique perspective.
7. Suspend status. No one perspective is more important than any other.
8. Honor each person’s right to “pass” if he or she is not ready or willing to speak.

Source: Co-intelligence Institute [http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-dialogue.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-dialogue.html)
Group to host discussion about racism

GEO LEDEC
STAFF WRITER

On Thursday, March 8, students are encouraged to bring an artifact that represents their racial experience in Omaha. The artifacts will be stored in a time capsule to be re-examined by students of the future.

The time capsule is part of a planned discussion organized by the UNO Difficult Dialogue Project. The discussion, “What Omaha Do You Live In? Talking Openly About Race and Identity,” will take place at 2:30 p.m. in the Milo Bail Student Center Ballroom, according to UNO What’s Up.

According to a letter from Interim Vice Chancellor John Christensen, participants in the event will have an opportunity to learn about dialogue: as a kind of conversation, whose purpose is to achieve speech, sensitive listening and mutual understanding. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice dialogue in small groups led by trained facilitators.

Nora Bacon, the director of the Difficult Dialogues Project, expects anywhere from 50 to 200 students to attend UNO’s first Difficult Dialogue event, which was made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation.

The goal of the event is to have people share their experiences in order to find an understanding, change personal attitudes and become more open-minded. Bacon said she hopes people will listen to each other sensitively and understand that differences are not because people are malicious but because they have different experiences.

Bacon said many faculty members would like to discuss controversial topics in the classroom but need more experience in order to have confidence in handling such debating. She said she feels Difficult Dialogue exercises will help build effective communication skills and eventually bring about positive ideas capable of changing race relations in Omaha.

“I feel we are too prideful to talk about race,” said senior Chris Basford, when asked about the status of racism at UNO.

The UNO Difficult Dialogues Project is hosting a discussion about racism in Omaha on Thursday, March 8 in the MBSC ballroom.

“arison to Iraq, graduated or quit,” London said. “I didn’t really...ed Pen and Sword as an academic group for ary members in the 1950s, and...lly faded in the 1990s. So in...London and a five or six others he group going again.

Eary after, London was deployed an when he returned home but no longer existed.

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The UNO Difficult Dialogues Project is hosting a discussion about racism in Omaha on Thursday, March 8 in the MBSC ballroom.

“When you walk into a classroom here you notice that students of similar culture only seem comfortable speaking to each other.”

Bacon encourages students to register online prior to the event at difficultdialogues@unomaha.edu. Walk-ins are also welcome. For more information call 554-4857.
Attachment C: Dialogues Funded by Mini-grants

List of Dialogues Funded by Mini-grants

Sampling of Flyers for Public Dialogues

*Gateway* article about Anti-Racism Dialogue
Breaking Silence:
Difficult Dialogues at the University of Nebraska at Omaha

Dialogues Funded by Mini-Grants, 2007-08

Black on Black: African Born and American Born
Matthew Smith
  Co-sponsors - African-American Organization, Pan-African Student
  Organization, Circle of Brotherhood, and Phi Beta Sigma
November 29, 2007

Women in Islam
Shafiqul Islam, Muslim Student Association
December 7, 2007

Anti-Racism Dialogue
Peggy Jones, Black Studies
January 19, 2008

What Omaha Do You Live In? An International Perspective
Lori Arias, International Programs
February 7, 2008

Black on Black II: African Born and American Born
Joanna LeFlore
  Co-sponsors - African-American Organization, Pan-African Student
  Organization, National Council of Negro Women
February 7, 2008

Telling It like It Is: High School Minority Students Talk to Future Educators
Carol Rozansky, Teacher Education
February 11, 2008

Women of Faith: Muslim, Christian, and Jew
Lori Young, Women's Studies, and Fred Richart, United Christian Ministries
March 5, 12, and 26, 2008

What UNO Do You Attend?
Barbara Treadway-Janousek and Sharif Liwaru, Student Organizations and
Leadership Programs
April 1, 2008

Developing Cross-Cultural Professor-Student Relationships
Monica Green, Multicultural Affairs
April 8, 2008

American Muslims: Challenging Stereotypes
Bridget Blomfield, Religion
April 11, 2008

The Power of Diversity
Jeannette Seaberry, Counseling
May 22, 2008
Black On Black: American Born & African Born

Purpose: This is a forum to discuss stereotypes, social gaps, and misconceptions that exist between American born Africans and African born Africans. This forum will be an open mic format and open to the public. Anyone can come and respectfully express their point of view.

When:
Thursday, November 29, 2007 11:30AM-1PM

Where:
Milo Bail Student Center: Chancellor’s Room (2nd Floor)

*There will be free food*

Sponsored by:
African-American Organization (AAO)
Pan-African Student Organization (PASO)
Circle of Brotherhood (CoB)
Phi Beta Sigma (ΦΒΣ)
DIFFICULT DIALOGUES

Women of faith coming together to read, listen, and explore their personal faiths in a safe space for dialogue

for women only--searching for personal faith with a global connection

What is it?
"the Faith Club is record of the growth of three women who met regularly to learn more about their personal faith and the faiths of others. The unique story here is that the women were from three international faiths: Christian, Muslim and Jew. They found their personal voice by confronting their own doubts, fears and convictions. They also demanded honesty and truth from each other as the dialogue continued. They sought outside resources when they needed them, but the primary force of the project was their conversation.

United Christian Ministries in Higher Education (UCMHE) at UNO has won a grant from Difficult Dialogues provide an opportunity for 24 UNO women to explore their faiths in a similar, though much compacted, way. Three hour events will be held in MBSC on the third floor on March 5, 12 and 26 from 3-5 PM. Each woman who engages in this project will be asked to read the book and participate in listening to the leaders' dialogue, then engage in their own dialogue with two other women, each of a different faith.

The Weekly Plan: Each session will begin with a modeled dialogue on a topic from the book. The leaders in the model will be one woman of faith from each of the three world religions. There are three sessions, so it is likely that a woman from each of the faith groups will have the opportunity to take a larger role. However, the plan is also to give wide leeway for decision making to the group of three who are the leaders.

A book will be provided for each participant and leader. Each week there will be refreshments--dark chocolate and jasmine tea.

Needed: three women leaders, one from each faith group and seven additional women from each faith group.
Difficult Dialogue: Developing Cross Cultural Professor-Student Relationships

You are invited to participate in a "straight talk" dialogue where you will share and listen to personal experiences surrounding the relationships between white professors and students of color.

Call or email today to reserve your spot in this research breaking dialogue!
Multicultural Affairs 554-2248 or email mgreen@mail.unomaha.edu

Free Lunch Included
Anti-Racism Public Dialogue
Saturday, January 19th, 7:30 am to 4 pm

UNO Milo Bail Student Center
Ballroom and Nebraska Room

Continental Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks will be available!!*

In preparation for meaningful dialogue,
prior to January 19th participants must have read
The Heart of Whiteness by Robert Jensen, and
Omaha World-Herald series "Omaha in Black and White"
(The series is available on-line at:

The book is available at:
The UNO Bookstore
Aframerican Bookstore, 3226 Lake Street

UNO students can register for 1 credit hour of independent study
in Black Studies Department, BLST 4900-002.

*This event is free, but for planning purposes, please RSVP by JANUARY 14th
by contacting Mrs. Dailey in the Black Studies Dept.
(402) 554-2412 or fdailey@mail.unomaha.edu.
'Difficult dialogue' on racism held in student center by black studies

Nicole Higginbotham
Asst. News/Sports Editor

"I've had to live this life and deal with these issues every single day and go and be really nice to people who have not seen my pain and not really responded to that," said Monica Greer, an attendee of the Anti-Racism Public Dialogue.

On Saturday, Jan. 19, the University of Nebraska held an Anti-Racism Public Dialogue in the Milo Bail Student Center's Nebraska Room. This event was sponsored by Margaret Jones, interim chair of UNO black studies, and funded by a grant from Difficult Dialogues.

Attendees were encouraged to read The Heart of Whiteness by Robert Jensen and the Omaha World-Herald Series "Omaha in Black and White."

"This past summer, I attended a summer institute to learn how to use collaborative arts to bring about social change," said Jones.

At the conclusion of the institute, Jones said they were asked to commit to make the world a better place.

"Since I was part of the core group for Difficult Dialogues, I decided to form an Anti-Racism Dialogue Circle with members drawn from both UNO and the broader Omaha community," said Jones. "After we'd met a few times at the Washington Branch library, we decided to have a public dialogue on Anti-Racism and White Privilege on the UNO campus."

The event started off with a small continental breakfast and a couple of group activities relating to minorities and majorities. After that, attendees were broke into groups and held a group discussion about The Heart of Whiteness.

In this discussion, there were mixed views of Jensen's work.

"It made me look at things differently," said Felecia Dailey. "His openness made me challenge myself, too."

After this discussion, attendees discussed the Omaha-World Herald series.

This led to questions about job security and job relocation assignments in Omaha because of race. Attendees also talked about the separation of Omaha and how people know the different areas by code words. The anti-racism forum followed up with steps that each individual could take to make their environment more accepting and less discriminatory.

"I hope I will see anti-racist action as proactive evidenced by the actions one can take to make the world less racist," said Jones.
Attachment D: Assessment Instruments

Dialogue Workshop Self-Evaluation
Dialogue Workshop Reflections
Activity Update Form
Evaluation Form for Dialogue Events (Impact of Dialogue Participation Scale)
Breaking Silence:  
Difficult Dialogues at the University of Nebraska at Omaha  
*UNO Alumni Center, Centennial Room, May 15-19, 2006*

In preparation for the workshop, please consider the following statements and circle a number from 1 to 5 indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Evaluation</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In the classroom or in co-curricular activities, I am a skilled facilitator of dialogues on controversial and sensitive issues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have knowledge of specific techniques and formats for facilitating difficult dialogues in the classroom or in co-curricular activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have a clear understanding of dialogue theory.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am comfortable communicating with people who are different from me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am comfortable talking about race with someone whose views differ from mine.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am comfortable talking about sexual orientation with someone whose views differ from mine.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am comfortable talking about religion with someone whose views differ from mine.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When a student and I have conflicting opinions about something important to me, I typically ask questions and try to understand the student’s perspective even though I may fundamentally disagree.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. When a coworker and I have conflicting opinions about something important to me, I typically ask questions and try to understand the coworker’s perspective even though I may fundamentally disagree.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When discussing a controversial issue, I feel it is important that others understand my point of view.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When talking with someone whose worldview is opposed to mine, I am curious to know how that person has arrived at his/her position.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am confident that I can participate in constructive dialogue with people who strongly disagree with me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am motivated to make a positive difference in the campus community on issues of diversity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRE-WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

1. When you have facilitated dialogues about controversial issues, whether in the classroom or in co-curricular activities, what have you done well? What have you not done well?

2. When facilitating dialogues on controversial issues, which issues are easier for you to talk about? Why?

3. When facilitating dialogues on controversial issues, which issues are more difficult for you to talk about? Why?