

## Change Begins with Staff: Reflections on Intergroup Dialogue Facilitator Training

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### Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) Context

- **Educational benefits of engaging with diversity**
  - Positive impact on democratic participation  
*(Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002)*
  - Involvement in college and community activities  
*(Gurin, Gurin, Dey, & Hurtado, 2004; Gurin and Nagda, 2006; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004)*
- **The spark: Impetus for IGD at UCLA**
  - African American enrollment decline
  - Research findings: Intersection of diversity and campus climate
  - Student concerns and frustrations

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## IGD at UCLA

### **Intergroup Relations Program at UCLA - Mission**

To advance UCLA students' academic success, well-being, and development through programs that foster skills necessary for living and working in an increasingly diverse and global society. By bringing diverse groups together for sustained and meaningful interaction, IGR empowers students to cultivate an inclusive campus community that values and respects the unique contributions of all its members. The Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) Program, in addition to our social media & arts projects/initiatives, workshops, trainings and Social Justice Academy, are a set of collective actions through which IGR actualizes this mission.



## Definition and Goals of IGD

- Sustained face-to-face meetings designed to offer an open and inclusive space where participants from different social identity groups can foster a deeper understanding of diversity and justice issues through participation in experiential activities, individual and small group reflections, and conversations.

### Goals:

- To explore the similarities and differences in experiences across social group memberships
- To gain knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of difference and dominance at the personal and political levels
- To develop a capacity for dialogue -- deep listening, suspending judgments, identifying assumptions, reflecting, and inquiring
- To develop skills to work with differences, disagreements, and conflicts as opportunities for deeper understanding and transformation



## IGD at UCLA

- **Three course types**
  - Dialogue session
  - Facilitator training course
  - Facilitator practicum/continuing education
- **Training course components:**
  - Quarter long course; 4hr weekly meetings
  - Dual learning experience
    - Content and Practicum
    - Self exploration



## Revised Staff Training

- **Training course components:**
  - One:** 3 consecutive days; 8 hrs/day
    - Dual learning experience
    - Focus: Content and Self exploration
  - Two:** Quarter long, 2hr weekly meetings
    - Dual learning experience
    - Focus: Self Exploration and Practicum/Continuing Education
    - Participation alongside UG students in IGD seminar
- Participation required for both!



## Overview of Assessment

- Understand the effectiveness of 3-day training program in preparing staff to facilitate IGD
- Focus group design
  - Pre-test focus group before training
  - Mid-point focus group after 3-day training
  - Post-test focus group after quarter of IGD



## Findings: Reflections on Structure of Training

- Communication of goals for training
- 3-day training model
- Level of openness
- Institutional commitment



## Findings: Goals for Training

- Goals going into training:
  - Enhance skills for communication, conflict resolution and advocacy with diverse students
  - Reflect of power structures within the University
  - Facilitate and participate in honest discussions of diversity
  - Contribute to improvement of campus climate



## Findings: Outcomes for Staff Competencies

- Perceived benefits of training:
  - Facilitation skills overall
  - In particular, active listening
  - Greater understanding of own identity; how it might be perceived by others in the dialogue space
- Questions about support for dialogue institutionally
  - Own role in making a broader impact



## Summary/Implications

- Definite need on campus
- Developing institutional buy-in
- Sufficient infrastructure
- Balance of commitments for staff



Chancellor Gene Block, *Letters to the Campus Community*  
February 10, 2012:

“It is our obligation to equip students for success in a complicated and interconnected world...a critical element of our mission [is] providing students with the intellectual skills to understand and address conflict in a respectful and effective manner.”

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*February 24, 2014 - The Impact of Proposition 209 and Our Duty to Our Students*

“While it’s important to understand that Proposition 209 is the underlying cause of many of these issues — and a cause that some leaders in our state are now looking to reverse — simply hoping that things will get easier is unacceptable. We must and will continue to search for new and innovative ways to achieve diversity within the confines of the law, but as Californians we must also rethink a flawed policy and find a way to better serve our students.

We must do more. We have a responsibility to do better.”




Questions?

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### Discussion

- How might you implement IGD principles in your own work?
- What would a staff training program look like in your context?
- What are you already doing?
- What opportunities exist that you might build upon?
- What challenges do you anticipate?

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