

Bridgebuilding in Higher Education: A Landscape Analysis

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Executive Summary

During the 2022-23 academic year, Interfaith America conducted a [landscape analysis](#) of existing bridgebuilding efforts to address polarization across U.S. Higher Education by interviewing bridgebuilding organization professionals, campus practitioners, and higher education leaders. While a universally accepted definition of “bridgebuilding” has yet to emerge, throughout the project, we shared and utilized this definition: *bridgebuilding work brings people together to engage across diverse identities and divergent ideologies in ways that respect identities, foster mutual relationships, and seek a common good.* Importantly, bridgebuilding work is not just a tactic for enabling more civil conversations. It is a fundamental value of higher education and a necessary skillset for students to develop while on campus in order to effectively lead in professional and civic spaces within the polarized U.S.

Even as colleges and universities focus more on diversity efforts, they are continuing to face a crisis of divisiveness. This should not surprise us: toxic polarization defines much of our culture and politics now, and colleges are places where opposing views are often expressed fiercely. Colleges themselves are not the problem, however; rather they may be the solution to our problem. They can model pluralism and educate leaders who can proactively build relationships across difference and deescalate conflict in other areas of our society, including local school boards and government.

There is increasing agreement amongst researchers focused on U.S. polarization that bridgebuilding interventions are a necessary precursor to both fostering healthier climates and seeking shared understanding or action

on specific issues. For decades, campuses have invested in community-based student learning opportunities, and while some of the skills like intellectual humility, curiosity, and deep listening overlap, bridgebuilding requires a slightly different approach. Bridgebuilding acknowledges there are deep differences at play and supports the development of mutual relationships and collaboration across those differences. Many colleges want to do the work of bridgebuilding but either do not know how or have small bridgebuilding programs that they have not yet determined how to scale. Some smaller scale bridgebuilding programs are thriving, modeling and fostering conversations across difference, but there is a need and opportunity for larger scale programs that can be embedded across an institution and influence campus culture in significant ways.

In the past decade, several nonprofit bridgebuilding organizations have emerged alongside longstanding organizations already in this space; these organizations can be a partner to campuses as they look to leverage their increased diversity for cooperation and learning across difference rather than toxic polarization. Pluralism is a hallowed academic field, and many relevant resources exist, including recent literature that focuses on the skills and impact of bridgebuilding. Pluralism is already something universities do and practice, and there are ways to invest more in this important work.

Recommendations

PHILANTHROPY

Within this context, the findings of the landscape analysis point toward the following recommendations for how philanthropy can invest in additional support for higher education:

1. Invest in campus efforts to develop a holistic, institution-wide approach to prioritizing bridgebuilding work, building on smaller scale bridgebuilding work already being done.
2. Support a convening organization to sustain collaboration, information and resource sharing, and learning amongst bridgebuilding organizations and leading campus practitioners.
3. Identify a partner to host a curated and searchable resource library.
4. Fund 3–5 year research studies on participant and campus climate impact for a range of campus programs, interventions, models, and types.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education associations can also play a leadership role in prioritizing bridgebuilding within the field, ideally with – but even possibly without – additional funding sources. The higher education association leaders at a May 2023 convening hosted by Interfaith America identified the following action steps, and several associations have already begun to take leadership in these areas or are committed to doing so in the coming year:

1. Include bridgebuilding as a thematic focus and keynote topic at upcoming conferences.
2. Write thought leadership pieces or op-eds to articulate the importance of bridgebuilding to an association's constituents.
3. Offer webinars, trainings, or other educational opportunities for an association's constituents to learn about bridgebuilding or build their own bridgebuilding skills.
4. Actively listen to campus constituents to learn more about their challenges and priorities related to bridgebuilding.
5. Create messaging language to align bridgebuilding with existing associational priorities.
6. Continue to discuss this priority – and opportunities to advance it collectively (e.g., through credentialing for students and/or professionals) – across associations and bridgebuilding organizations.

Bridgebuilding in Higher Education: A Landscape Analysis

Many leaders within and adjacent to the higher education sector have felt the urgent need to address polarization on campus and in broader society since the lead up to the 2016 presidential election. A growing [perception gap](#) across partisan divides, increasing [distrust](#) in colleges and universities, and the breakdown of social norms in the last eight years have been met by new bridgebuilding interventions, programs, and the development of learning outcomes and campus climate measures to address polarization. The decline in trust in institutions and with one's perceived "out" group have an impact on the economic health of the nation and susceptibility of communities to violence.

In the face of this society-wide challenge, higher education's opportunity to reverse the trend of polarization and strengthen the fabric of America's diverse democracy is significant. Interfaith America (IA) president and founder, Eboo Patel, has asserted that [bridgebuilding skills are essential](#) for all college graduates; what would it take for college presidents to feel confident that graduating students are prepared to adeptly lead through contentious situations across deep ideological, religious, and cultural divides in their civic and professional lives? Addressing polarization will take newly coordinated and resourced strategies to make gains in the near future and beyond, and we believe the following learnings and recommendations will contribute to that effort.

FINDINGS

Interfaith America's Landscape Analysis has come at a key moment for bridgebuilding work within higher education. These are a few of our key learnings around the major constituents in this work; the below themes are synthesized from across interviews but do not aim to generalize about all individuals in each category, given the significant internal diversity of each group discussed. One cross-cutting question that was raised from every audience yet largely unresolved throughout the duration of interviews is the relationship between bridgebuilding work and the pursuit of equity outcomes. While there was broad consensus that these methods need not be at odds, there were differing approaches on whether and how to bring forth equity in bridgebuilding work, as well as acknowledgement that, without strategic preparation, one can undercut the other.

Campuses are at very different stages of development in engaging bridgebuilding skills amongst students and cultivating an ethic of bridgebuilding within a campus culture. Many are embracing piecemeal programs and interventions, anchored in one staff, faculty or administrator's commitment and interest. Importantly, on a few vanguard campuses, departments and administrators are now working to establish a more systemic, campus-wide approach – this is ultimately necessary for lasting change and now is the time to invest in robust evaluation of such interventions. For many more campuses, of course, bridgebuilding is not an explicit priority.



Students are essential leaders and participants in prioritizing bridgebuilding on campus. It is important to frame for students why this work matters from a range of perspectives and invite them to share their own priorities related to bridgebuilding. While some students will resonate with the value of civic engagement and community resilience, others will be motivated by bridgebuilding skills as a professional asset, as a beneficial approach for achieving their own aims of justice (e.g., tackling climate change, reducing hate and violence), especially on issues that have become polarized, and as an invitation to lead where political and cultural elites have not consistently modeled these skills. As campuses continue to be impacted by growing polarization, both in campus culture and as talking points in broader “culture wars,” and as young adults continue to struggle with mental health and anxiety, it becomes increasingly important to foster a campus-wide priority and culture of bridgebuilding, as compared to one-off events or programs.

Campus senior administrators (presidents, provosts, vice presidents) often feel “caught up” in the culture wars and do not feel that they are equipped to cultivate campuses where bridgebuilding is the norm without student demand, board of directors’ buy-in, and faculty support. Many senior administrators also seek confidential spaces to wrestle with the good faith challenges of balancing freedom of expression with diversity, equity, and inclusion, even as the stress of enrollment and budget challenges undergirds most decisions.

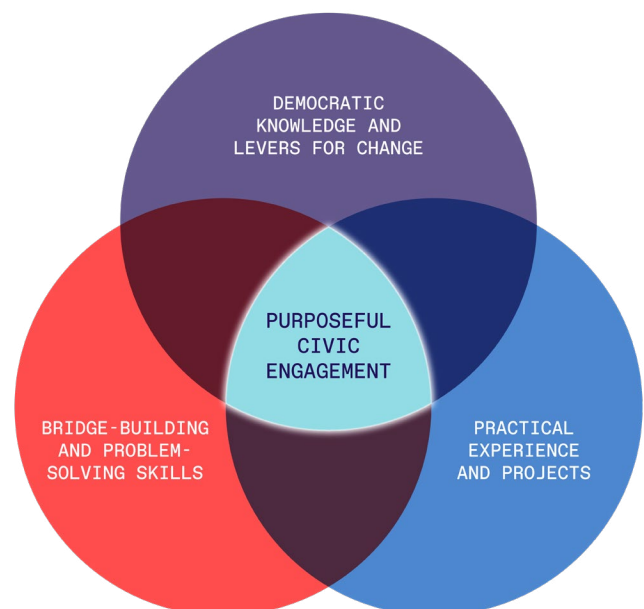
Staff and faculty do not want to “recreate the wheel;” they recognize that there are great existing models but often struggle to find an intervention that achieves their need for their campus context. They would value a searchable database of organizations and resources to draw on for the range of curricular, co-curricular, and campus climate interventions they are developing.

- Bridgebuilding programs on campus take significant time and investment from educators. If this leadership is not compensated or integrated into one's role explicitly, it is not sustainable. This is particularly true for campuses where staff and faculty wear multiple hats (e.g., smaller campuses, underfunded campuses).
- While campus professionals leading bridgebuilding efforts understand the value of scalable models, they also value localized context and networks. The bridgebuilding field has long recognized the high priority that should be given to localized engagement, informed by a specific context, and led by members of the community. Multiple campuses interviewed expressed interest in bridgebuilding resources that are tailored to their geography, local culture, and/or institution type. Others valued the opportunity to reference associational resources and priorities in informing their bridgebuilding programs; this was clearest amongst members of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, who wanted models tailored for Christian institutions.
- It is helpful for campus professionals who lead bridgebuilding efforts when national partners (associations, granting organizations, etc.) recognize and honor their bridgebuilding work. This helps educators continue to prioritize bridgebuilding programs and interventions, enabling them to sustain programs long enough to see the impact that multiple years of participation can have on a broader campus community. The opportunity to sustain programs for multiple years was a bright spot for several educators.

Higher Education Associations are aware of the questions that the public is asking about the fundamental value proposition of higher education and want to prioritize bridgebuilding work within that context. Many field leaders have asked: does bridgebuilding sit squarely

within civic engagement or is it something different, perhaps fundamental in its own right to higher education's purpose? One's response has implications for where and how deeply a commitment to bridgebuilding can be anchored. Articulating bridgebuilding as essential to a liberal arts education and to what it means to be an educated person anchors this commitment at the highest level but perhaps leaves no specific and clear implementation avenues.

There are benefits to articulating bridgebuilding as a key component of civic engagement, for instance, embedding it through [Carnegie Classifications](#), discipline requirements, first year experience or general education. A new collaborative, the [Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition](#) (CLDE Coalition) is in an excellent position to support the continued prioritization, experimentation, and research around bridgebuilding and higher education from a field approach; bridgebuilding is explicitly articulated as one of the core components of their framework for college civic learning. Alternately, conflating the terms of civic engagement and bridgebuilding could limit the application of bridgebuilding skills, which are essential not only for civic engagement but also for professional excellence in any field.



[COLLEGE CIVIC LEARNING FRAMEWORK, 2023](#)

Campus Compact, the largest and longest-running national association exclusively dedicated to higher education's community and civic engagement mission, is exploring pathways to develop a resource hub that will support campus leaders in navigating and engaging with evidence-based bridgebuilding practices that meet their specific campus and community needs. This collection of resources may include an online platform and related supplemental resources that connect faculty, staff, and administrators with necessary tools and entry points (e.g., curricular vs. co-curricular). Campus Compact is a lead partner of the CLDE Coalition.

Regardless of where this work is anchored, it is crucial to maintain the framing that bridgebuilding work is not merely a tactic for enabling more civil conversations, but a fundamental value of higher education and a skillset that students can develop while on campus and later use throughout their civic and professional lives. This frame ensures that students graduating from any college or university are prepared to lead and work in our polarized communities and companies.

When we asked a set of leaders of higher education associations, organizations, and foundations what they needed to advance bridgebuilding work holistically in higher education, they identified four areas:

- A compelling “why” for prioritizing bridgebuilding work
- Shared framework and definitions
- Program or curricular models, resources, and strategies
- New funding streams

Bridgebuilding organizations have grown significantly in number, funding, and sophistication in evaluation of programmatic impacts. There is a fundamental need for a mechanism for sharing effective tools with

campuses that want them and connecting campuses seeking interventions with bridgebuilding organizations that have tested programs. In addition to this functional need, several bridgebuilding organizations interviewed for this analysis were at the development stage of shifting from the start-up phase, supported by volunteer time and grants, to a more sustainable model of seeking a hybrid fee-for-service or membership structure. Without further investment from philanthropy or the higher education sector itself, these organizations will not have the needed resources to grow their work and measure sustained intervention over time.

- Long established higher education leaders focused on civic engagement (e.g., Bonner Program, Constructive Dialogue Institute, Sustained Dialogue Institute, Essential Partners) have evidence-based models and strong networks, and several younger organizations (e.g., Braver Angels, BridgeUSA, Constructive Dialogue Institute) bring scalable interventions. Other organizations (e.g., Heterodox Academy, Institute for Citizens and Scholars, Greater Good Science Center) engage a specific segment of the campus (faculty, administrators, campus teams respectively) through both capacity building and networking. Some organizations (e.g., Living Room Conversations) lead tailored collaboration with specific campuses alongside accessible public resources for multiple sectors, while others have developed resources for specific communities within higher education (e.g., Redeeming Babel for evangelical Christians). This is a rich and robust field of innovative practitioners that has grown so quickly that even leaders in the field struggle to keep track of the organizations, interventions, and latest evidence.

- Several newer bridgebuilding organizations are looking to shift from foundation and grant based funding models, with offerings that are free to campuses, to a more sustainable model with some fee-for-service offerings. Organizations recognize that as polarization increases in profile, there is a danger that organizations could begin to close off, become more territorial, or less likely to collaborate in a desire to secure more resources. However, leaders were enthusiastic about continuing to stay connected, learn from one another, and work smarter, not harder, to expand their programs and interventions to more campus communities.
- Organizational leaders hypothesized that a strong evidence base, nonpartisan public profile, and broader awareness of bridgebuilding work on campus will benefit not only the field, but individual organizations as well. There are regular opportunities for bridgebuilding organizations to partner or refer campus leaders to each other because their audiences or methodologies are distinctive and complementary.

Communities beyond campus provide opportunities to invest in and measure the impact of bridgebuilding work over time. Bridging work is inherently local. Anchoring the “why” of bridgebuilding in civic leadership is helpful because communities around the nation are experiencing the fissure, roadblocks, and pain of deep divisions. Local communities are often more ideologically diverse than campus communities; community partnerships provide opportunities for applying bridgebuilding skills and understanding their “real-world” impact. As one example, Bethel University is a Christian university in the heart of St. Paul, MN, a community deeply impacted by the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the global, national, and, importantly, very local response. Bethel has begun accepting high school seniors from

across the city for coursework on campus, and a significant number of visibly Muslim students are enjoying this educational opportunity. As the campus proactively prioritizes bridgebuilding skills for campus leaders, faculty, and students, this residential evangelical Christian campus is becoming better equipped to engage both the tensions and opportunities in their own backyard.

For decades, campuses have invested in community-based student learning experiences. While some of the skills overlap (intellectual humility, curiosity, deep listening), bridgebuilding requires a slightly different approach that at some point acknowledges the differences at play and enables mutual relationship. A few bright spot campuses have invested heavily in bridgebuilding work in their communities, but we believe many more would do so if it were accessible, resourced, and grounded in evidence-based practices. Higher education associations with a community engagement priority, for example, Campus Compact, are well positioned to strengthen this gap in bridgebuilding in higher education. Campus Compact has already named polarization, civic discourse, and bridgebuilding as major themes of their Compact24 annual conference and will bring together scholars and practitioners for learning and sharing about the integration of bridgebuilding within community engagement and partnership work.

Establishing shared outcomes for bridgebuilding in higher education received the greatest interest from higher education associations, largely in the broader context of seeking a shared purpose and framework for this work. Bridgebuilding organizations articulated shared outcomes as a less urgent priority. However, there was broad consensus around key categories of outcomes: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Within those categories, bridgebuilding organizations collectively named 21 skills and attitudes as measurable outcomes ([see Appendix C](#)) though there

was no consensus around the top three to five outcomes. Notably, a subset of the bridgebuilding organizations interviewed have robust evaluation tools for measuring their outcomes, as previously noted. Partnering with the bridgebuilding field outside of higher education, learning from research initiatives within higher education, and further investment in research and evaluation will contribute to

defining, measuring, and prioritizing the range of outcomes achieved by various bridgebuilding approaches. If a centralized resource exists that shares the outcomes of different bridgebuilding initiatives, campus leaders will be better positioned to find partner organizations in line with their intended outcomes.

In May 2023, a group of higher education association and bridgebuilding organization leaders identified the following individual and societal outcomes as priorities for bridgebuilding work in higher education:

Individual Outcomes

Individual-level outcomes for students can largely be categorized as skills or attitudes. These include:

Skills:

- Civil discourse
- Conflict resolution
- Constructive disagreement
- Critical thinking
- Listening
- Sharing one's ethic of bridgebuilding/ storytelling

Attitudes:

- Empathy
- Respect for complex identities
- (Sense of) hope

Societal Outcomes

Larger societal outcomes can largely be categorized as the equipping of leaders and individuals and shared attitudes across society. These include:

Equipping of leaders and individuals:

- Leaders are equipped to lead through bridging
- People are equipped to engage across differences
- Wealth of opportunities to achieve the individual outcomes articulated above

Attitudes:

- Belonging
- Connectedness to others
- Civic purpose/agency
- Hopeful about commitment to constitutional democracy
- (Sense of) hope
- Shared commitment to and narrative of the common good
- Strengthening democratic norms

Recommendations and Next Steps

PHILANTHROPY

In the process of developing the Landscape Analysis and socializing it with bridgebuilding organizations and higher education associations, we believe that this is the right time for philanthropy to invest additional support in the field in several ways:

1. **Invest in efforts to integrate bridgebuilding work across campus environments for multiple years.** Now is a critical time to financially support institutions that are ready to move from piecemeal programs to integrating the culture of and capacity for bridgebuilding throughout the campus. A campus-wide approach, with curricular and co-curricular-components led by dedicated staff, will catalyze the priority of bridgebuilding. Increased investment could accelerate these efforts, support evaluation of them, and ultimately support the sharing of successful models with other institutions.
2. **Support a convening organization or coalition to sustain collaboration, information, resource sharing, and learning across bridgebuilding organizations and campus practitioners through the next 2-3 years.** It would be beneficial to bridgebuilding work in higher education to partner with the CLDE Coalition, which has ties to educational associations, bridgebuilding organizations, policy influencers, and educators considering a range of higher education rubrics and frameworks. The Greater Good Science Center also plays a leadership role by hosting a Bridging Differences in Higher Education Learning Fellowship, which brings together bridgebuilding practitioners – with cohorts for both campus and organizational leaders – for shared learning and exchange.
3. **Identify a partner to host a curated and searchable resource library** with clear descriptions of the organizations and their modalities (e.g., curriculum, online learning and training, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, consultation), audiences, and outcomes/goals, ideally connecting the intervention with research or evidence of its effectiveness. This would need to be hosted by a trusted source that has the capacity to update, promote, and garner feedback. Alternately, this could take the form of a wiki that relies on collective valuing and maintenance of a tool in a field that is quickly growing.
4. **Invest in 3–5 year research studies on participant and campus climate impact for a range of campus programs, interventions, models, and types.** For instance, a two-year 2023 grant from the John Templeton Foundation in partnership with American Council of Trustees and Alumni, Braver Angels and BridgeUSA will “evaluate the effects of Braver Angels debates on students at 10 colleges and universities across the U.S.” ([ACTA Press Release 2022](#)). This kind of investment will provide thorough evidence and guidance for achieving individual, campus, and community level impact for bridgebuilding work. This is particularly important for campus bridgebuilding programs that involve robust campus-community partnerships, in which the value of bridgebuilding efforts should be having a positive impact on undercutting the effects of polarization at both the campus and community level.

- There is an opportunity to tap into existing campus climate and student attitude surveys to measure student outcomes, as well as existing research efforts on campus and beyond through centers including the Greater Good Science Center (University of California, Berkeley), Polarization Research Lab (Stanford University, Dartmouth College, and the University of Pennsylvania), Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL, American University), and the Bridging Movement Alignment Council (BMAC).

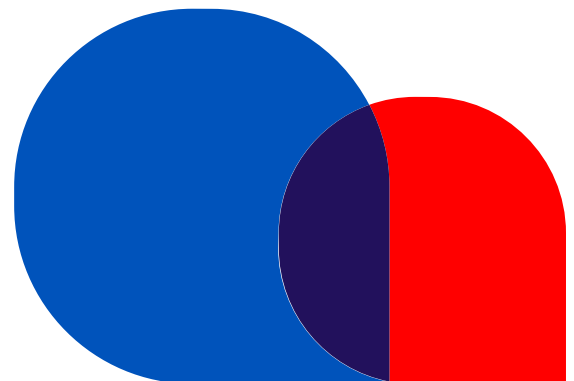
HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education associations can also play a leadership role in prioritizing bridgebuilding within the field, ideally with – but even possibly without – additional funding sources. The higher education association leaders at an Interfaith America hosted May 2023 convening identified the following action steps, and several associations have already begun to take leadership in these areas or are committed to doing so in the coming year:

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4. Actively listen to campus constituents to learn more about their challenges and priorities related to bridgebuilding.
5. Create messaging language to align bridgebuilding with existing associational priorities.

6. Continue to discuss this priority – and opportunities to advance it collectively (e.g., through credentialing for students and/or professionals) – across associations and bridgebuilding organizations.

Leading up to the 2024 presidential election and through the next 3-5 years are a crucial time to prioritize bridgebuilding across U.S. college and university campuses in order to maintain a concerted network, secure new and additional funding, and elevate and support organizations, associations, and individual campuses that are taking leadership in this work. The process of drafting and socializing the Landscape Analysis revealed a hunger to maintain an awareness of this quickly growing field, and a desire and commitment to share program models, existing resources, and opportunities for collaboration. Achieving several modest goals in the next 18 months (outlined in the recommendations) can build a stronger foundation for this growing field, position college and university campuses to lead in a diverse democracy and strengthen the communities in and around higher education institutions.



BACKGROUND & METHOD

During the 2022-23 academic year, Interfaith America conducted a landscape analysis of existing bridgebuilding efforts across U.S. Higher Education by interviewing bridgebuilding organization professionals, campus practitioners, and higher education association leaders in order to understand the range of desired outcomes, promising models, challenges, and opportunities in this work across the sector.

With support from [More Perfect](#), the Interfaith America team began the Landscape Analysis by defining our terms. At the broadest definition, interviewees all understood bridgebuilding work to mean bringing different individuals or groups together for relationship or shared action. Once we began to speak in the specifics of a campus or program, the strategies and even pedagogy of effective bridgebuilding work meant different things to different people (e.g., a synonym for racial reconciliation, debate or dialogue; foregrounding difference and disagreement; or prioritizing shared values). We prioritized not seeking a shared definition but asking people to be explicit and clear about the definition they used ([See Appendix D](#)). Throughout the project we shared Interfaith America's definition: *bridgebuilding work brings people together to engage across diverse identities and divergent ideologies in ways that respect identities, foster mutual relationships, and seek a common good*. For IA, this means engaging even the differences each of us deeply disagree with or find challenging (Patel, E. [We Need to Build: Field Notes for Diverse Democracy](#), Ch. 11). It also means not merely engaging in dialogue across differences but coming together across those differences for shared civic purposes.

One impetus for this Landscape Analysis is the rapid growth of multiple models for addressing polarization; the review therefore needed to bring in the voices of the myriad of stakeholders in this field. To begin, we interviewed 13 bridgebuilding organizations

([see Appendices B and E](#)), a few solely within higher education, and the majority engaging several sectors including higher education. In order to capture a snapshot of the range of needs and models for enhancing bridgebuilding skills on campus, we conducted interviews with practitioners from 16 campuses ([see Appendix A](#)), with representation from across campus types (public, private nonsectarian, private religious, community college), geographies (10 states from coast to coast), and affiliations (Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, Minority Serving Institutions). These campuses represented a range of types and levels of investment in bridgebuilding work. We recognize that our set of interviewees could never be fully comprehensive of all models in the field, but we aimed to include a diverse set of voices to inform our analysis. Finally, we discussed the Landscape Analysis findings with diverse stakeholders from January–May 2023 at a range of conferences. These discussions culminated in a convening in May 2023 with higher education association and bridgebuilding organization leaders, and current and potential funders ([see Appendix F](#)), to frame how the needs and opportunities of the field can be addressed by existing or new scalable models.

This analysis was made possible by generous support from the Walmart Foundation. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report are those of Interfaith America alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Walmart Foundation.

Thank you to More Perfect for enabling this project and for their partnership in its creation.



About

ABOUT INTERFAITH AMERICA

Founded in 2002, Interfaith America is the premier interfaith organization in the United States, with a \$15M budget, 50 full-time professional staff, and \$5M in grants distributed in 2021. Through its initiatives and partnerships, Interfaith America is equipping individuals and professionals with the knowledge and skills needed for leadership in a religiously diverse world.

For more information, please visit Interfaith America's [website](#) and follow Interfaith America on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Interfaith America also recently released a new [video](#) "We Need to Build an Interfaith America," where Patel outlines a vision for the next chapter of this organization.

ABOUT MORE PERFECT

More Perfect is a national campaign to marshal energy, visibility, resources and results around a common, nonpartisan vision for a more effective and enduring democracy. More Perfect is an alliance of 14 Presidential Centers, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Karsh Institute of Democracy at the University of Virginia, National Archives Foundation, and more than 100 partners to help protect and renew our democracy as we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and beyond.

ABOUT PHILANTHROPY AT WALMART

Walmart.org represents the philanthropic efforts of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. By focusing where the business has unique strengths, Walmart.org works to tackle key social and environmental issues and collaborate with others to spark long-lasting systemic change. Walmart has stores in 24 countries, employs more than 2 million associates and does business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs to accelerate upward job mobility for frontline workers, advance equity, address hunger, build inclusive economic opportunity for people in supply chains, protect and restore nature, reduce waste and emissions, and build strong communities where Walmart operates.

To learn more, visit www.walmart.org or connect on [Twitter @Walmartorg](#).

Appendix A:

College and University Interviews

Overviews of campus bridging work were compiled through interviews. Expanded overviews below were developed for a forthcoming article in the *Journal of College and Character*.

AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

As a community college, the CA system profoundly shapes how the institution engages diversity, equity and inclusion and bridgebuilding work. At ARC this work is anchored in the institutional commitment to DEI, and relies on passionate leaders (faculty, staff of centers) to prioritize it through training and building on campus networks. Training and events must be linked to district and state outcomes, so it is essential to track the goals and impact of any intervention.



LOCATION:

Sacramento, CA

TYPE:

Public Community College

SIZE:

26,000

BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

The Office of Inclusive Excellence is integrating Cultural Intelligence and Bridging the Gap curriculum. These trainings are first facilitated with campus leaders, and subsequently with faculty and students.

In addition to skill building, Bethel sees the need for bridgebuilding skills in professional programs like nursing midwifery, journalism, and programs for higher education professionals. The University seeks to prepare students “for God’s glory and neighbor’s good.” This priority has long included racial reconciliation. With new applicants from diverse faith traditions, there are active discussions on campus about skills for bridging a range of identities to cultivate a campus of welcome and belonging.



LOCATION:

St. Paul, MN

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

2,500

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:

Christian, Interdenominational

Appendix A (continued)

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

The College of DuPage has prioritized service-learning work for decades and grown its bridgebuilding work in the past ten years. During that time, civic engagement work moved from a narrow focus within Career Services to a robust set of co-curricular programs offered through a variety of departments. As the campus becomes more diverse, students are seeking social change skills and the campus has benefited from staff and faculty willing to champion this work.

Bridgebuilding work is often integrated into coursework through global virtual exchange programs and local field trips, which are integrated into relevant courses (e.g., political science, speech and communication) at no additional cost to students and tracked on the co-curricular transcript. These experiences are seen as gateway programs to deeper leadership development work, which teaches students skills to bridge divides and connect with people who are different from them. The co-curricular work aligns with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies, including communication, critical thinking, equity & inclusion, leadership, and teamwork.



College of DuPage

LOCATION:

Glen Ellyn, IL

TYPE:

Public Community College

SIZE:

22,000

DICKINSON COLLEGE

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Dickinson College developed the [Dialogues Across Differences](#) (DXD) program following a generous grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations. DXD seeks to address the increasing polarization that threatens community cohesion and undermines learning, often causing students to dismiss diverse perspectives, censor others, and/or censor themselves. DXD promotes dialogue in classrooms and campus spaces and imparts to faculty and students the skills of deep listening, sustained curiosity, and respect for diverse viewpoints. DXD includes [faculty learning communities](#) which helps faculty think critically and creatively about how to incorporate dialogical skills into their classes. These faculty are then eligible to apply for [follow-on course development grants](#). DXD supports the development of [INTD 250: Speaking and Writing Across Differences](#) in which students take a deep dive into dialogic practices and train to be campus and community dialogue leaders. Moving forward, DXD will equip teams of students to plan, facilitate, and assess community and campus dialogues. In this way, DXD imagines bridging as moving outward from the classroom to the community, from learning experiences to true civic engagement.

Dickinson

LOCATION:

Carlisle, PA

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

2,500

Appendix A (continued)

DUKE UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Duke University is engaged in several efforts that promote bridgebuilding and civil discourse. The [Civil Discourse Project](#) (CDF) is housed within Duke's Kenan Institute for Ethics. CDF sponsors courses, lectures, conferences, and research that encourage the cultivation of intellectual and civic virtues. Additionally, CDF strives to foster community across ideological divides between those who share a passion for and commitment to genuine truth-seeking amidst honest disagreement. Among the classes it supports is "How to Think in an Age of Political Polarization," a class that prioritizes teaching students the skills to practice civil, honest, and empathetic conversation about contentious political topics. Duke's [Transformative Ideas](#) has also recently created a student "living learning community" with a residential experience in which students learn, form, and connect with students of different worldviews without the pressures to conform or perform. Finally, Duke hosts [national seminars on civil discourse](#) for faculty from across the United States.



LOCATION:

Durham, NC

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

17,000

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:

None

(historically United Methodist)

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Harvard University received requests from students for sustained opportunities to build the skills to navigate conversations around political and worldview difference. In response, the Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics collaborated with ethics centers at four diverse campuses to launch the Intercollegiate Civil Disagreement Partnership (ICDP) Fellowship during the 2020-2021 academic year. The ICDP is a cross-institutional program between Harvard University, California State University-Bakersfield, Santa Fe College, St. Philip's College, and Stanford University, with leadership distributed equally among members. Each year, eight fellows are selected from each partner school to participate in a two-semester hybrid program. Fellows meet every 1-2 weeks and receive training in facilitation, engage in dialogue about controversial issues, and interact with expert speakers who model civil disagreement. Sessions alternate between in-person institutional gatherings and intercollegiate Zoom sessions with the full student cohort. The curriculum is developed by a cross-institutional pedagogy team and enlists student alumni of the fellowship as Senior Fellows to help lead the program. The program's leadership is regularly asked to consult with other campus leaders to integrate ICDP resources and activities into orientation, general education, residential life programming, and more.

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

LOCATION:

Cambridge, MA

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

31,000

Appendix A (continued)

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

James Madison University's leadership is actively committed to civic engagement and dialogue. The James Madison Center for Civic Engagement reaches nearly every first-year student through events and programs that partner with the university's passport program that encourages students to explore different parts of campus. Alongside a broad set of civic programs, they host programs specifically on bridgebuilding across deep divides, including their Common Good Conversations program and National Week of Deliberation. James Madison's Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue educates and trains students, faculty, staff and community members to facilitate campus and community conversations that ask tough questions and encourage people to come together to understand each other as they seek to address challenges and envision possibilities. Through both research and programming, the Institute encourages participation in tough conversations and engages problem-solving skills which ultimately strengthen democracy. James Madison's bridgebuilding programs are deep and broad. For instance, they have partnered with the Constructive Dialogue Institute to do their Perspectives course in the classroom and pair that with on-campus deliberative dialogue forums and broader programming.

**LOCATION:**

Harrisonburg, VA

TYPE:

Public

SIZE:

22,000

JOHN BROWN UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

John Brown University participated in the Bridging the Gap program in 2021-2022, in partnership with Philander Smith College (now Philander Smith University). This pairing emerged from JBU's participation in the Arkansas Honors College Network. Bridgebuilding work on campus often focuses on racial identity, including both in the classroom and in extracurricular programs (e.g., spring break trips, Mosaic student organization). Faculty and staff have a book group focused on diverse voices, and take an annual trip focused on regional racial history. Annually John Brown University hosts a public facing event focused on faith and public life. As an interdenominational Christian school the campus is proactively engaged in dialogue around religious and racial identity, sexual orientation, and the experience of welcome and belonging on campus.

**LOCATION:**

Siloam Springs, AR

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

2,000

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:

Christian, Interdenominational

Appendix A (continued)

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Middlebury College expanded their programming around polarization and bridgebuilding after a major campus challenge highlighted a need to develop skills for listening. In this challenging context, the college began to proactively and constructively build new programs and initiatives. In 2018, Middlebury received an \$800,000 grant from the Melon Foundation and launched the [Engaged Listening Project \(ELP\)](#), a three-year initiative focused “on the conditions under which we (as teachers, scholars, students, and citizens) listen to one another.” ELP included a faculty fellows program to provide training in facilitating productive disagreements in the classroom and a partnership with the Vermont Humanities Council to develop a new format for visiting speakers that enables more robust audience engagement with speakers and with one another. Since then, the ELP inspired and has been integrated into the new [Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation](#), launched in 2022, which has become an incubator for research, teaching, and creating student experiences to address division. They have embedded principles and practices of conflict transformation with high school, undergraduate, and graduate students by focusing on experiential learning, community engagement, and global literacy. ELP continues to exist in its 2.0 version, a faculty-designed and faculty-led effort that expands and adapts the cohort-based model of professional development to support listening and dialogue across difference.

Middlebury
College**LOCATION:**

Middlebury, VT

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

3,000

Appendix A (continued)

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Providence College (PC) is a Catholic institution of higher education that is called on by its mission to “dialogue with others” and critically engage with the world. PC has been laying the seeds for civic renewal with the Dialogue, Inclusion, and Democracy (DID) Lab, an action research lab fostering civil discourse since 2018. Led by Dr. Quincy Bevely, VP for Institutional Diversity, and Dr. Nicholas Longo, Professor of Global Studies, the DID Lab aims to develop a practical philosophy of “what works” to critically engage with complex issues and disputed questions.

PC has seen the power of student leadership in civil discourse efforts on campus. After learning to integrate deliberative practices in a course on dialogue, diversity, and civic engagement, a team of students created “democracy walls” for civil discourse across campus. These public spaces aim to “create a safe space that supports the development of well-informed and engaged citizens through civil discourse.”

With support from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the DID Lab launched Conversations for Change in fall 2022 to create inclusive spaces that support the development of well-informed and engaged students. This includes: a student fellows’ program that catalyzes facilitative leadership, faculty learning communities that promote dialogue across differences, courses that embed civil discourse across the curriculum, workshops and speakers promoting dialogue, diversity, and civic engagement, and public dialogues that connect the campus and the local community.



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

LOCATION:

Providence, RI

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

4,700

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:

Catholic, Dominican

Appendix A (continued)

PHILANDER SMITH UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Philander Smith College (now Philander Smith University), a Historically Black College in Little Rock, AR, [paired](#) with John Brown University to participate in the Bridging the Gap program in the 2021-22 academic year. The program taught students from both campuses bridgebuilding skills and enabled them to build relationships through a weekend intensive at Philander Smith College, weekly meetings with leaders from multiple perspectives involved in criminal justice, and a final retreat at John Brown University. Students developed deep trust through these encounters, which involved radical hospitality and openness to vulnerability, allowing them to dive into difficult topics such as racism, class divides, and problems in the criminal justice system. Campus lead Ashley Embry, who began this work while serving as Interim Director of the McKinley Newton Honors Academy, sees bridgebuilding work as deeply connected to Philander Smith's mission to ground students as advocates for social justice. The university plans to add bridgebuilding skills to the honors and general education personal development courses. Philander Smith University and John Brown University built their partnership through relationships established in the Arkansas Honors College Network.

**LOCATION:**

Little Rock, AR

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

800

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:

United Methodist Church

Appendix A (continued)

SPRING ARBOR UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Spring Arbor's bridgebuilding work began with their partnership with Oberlin College through the Bridging the Gap program in 2020, which included a pilot course that taught bridgebuilding skills, involved an encounter between students from the two campuses, and explored policy applications to the complex issue of criminal justice reform. Spring Arbor continues to offer a three-week intensive course annually that builds on that pilot as well as a variety of on-campus events focused on bridgebuilding.

More recently, the university is working toward a multi-year goal of integrating the Skills for Bridging the Gap curriculum, now embedded within Interfaith America, into their General Education courses and university culture. During the 2022-23 academic year, Dr. Mark Edwards and Dr. Tom Holsinger-Friesen built modules to present bridgebuilding skills within Spring Arbor's distinctively Christian liberal arts context. In fall 2023, they will roll out the revised COR100 and COR300 courses (interdisciplinary 'core' courses required of all freshmen and juniors, respectively) and work on integrating bridgebuilding into the remaining two core courses, to be launched in fall 2024. In December 2023, they will receive the first data from student evaluations of those courses to assess progress and adjust plans as needed. Spring Arbor also offers bridgebuilding training for key leadership groups on campus including Resident Advisors, Peer Advisors, and faculty, as part of their broader efforts to influence campus culture.

Spring Arbor is expanding their bridgebuilding work into the local community in multiple ways. Kevin Brown, Chief Diversity Officer and Vice President for Student Development and Success, has developed a partnership with Henry Ford Hospital to train the hospital's senior leadership on creating a positive feedback and growth culture using bridgebuilding skills. Faculty are also planning a 2024 conference for local middle and high school teachers and administrators, and possibly high school students, to be trained in the Bridging the Gap curriculum and explore how bridgebuilding skills can be brought to local schools. These efforts aim to increase Spring Arbor leaders' capacity in bridgebuilding by teaching others, to offer meaningful professional development for local teachers, and to foster more positive relationships between the university and Jackson County.

**LOCATION:**

Spring Arbor, MI

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

3,000

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION:Free Methodist Church
of North America

Appendix A (continued)

TUFTS UNIVERSITY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

Nancy Thomas, former Director of the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, was interviewed as a field expert. Tufts University is a leader in civic education within the higher education sector and has an [extensive overview](#) of their civic engagement work.

LOCATION:

Medford, MA

TYPE:

Private

SIZE:

12,000

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

A University of California, Berkeley's [Othering and Belonging Institute](#) staff member was interviewed as a field expert.

LOCATION:

Berkeley, CA

TYPE:

Public

SIZE:

45,000

Appendix A (continued)

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

University of Maryland, Baltimore County's Center for Democracy and Civic Life "helps people develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to create healthy communities and tackle challenges together." One prominent program is the weeklong sessions in fall and spring breaks, during which about 50 students participate in storytelling, community building, education, critical thinking about campus culture, and brainstorming opportunities to shape campus life. Over the course of the Center's four years on campus, it has helped to shape cultural norms toward humane values and students' belief and hope that they can help change the world for the better.



LOCATION:

Baltimore, MD

TYPE:

Public, MSI

SIZE:

11,000

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

BRIDGEBUILDING OVERVIEW

The University of Virginia has several efforts to facilitate dialogue across lines of difference at UVA and in the community, led by the Karsh Institute for Democracy. For the past two years, the Karsh Institute has partnered with StoryCorps to run a conversation program that pairs people across ideological and cultural differences to engage in meaningful dialogue with one another. Student and staff facilitators have lightly facilitated and recorded over 150 paired conversations, with participants ranging from students, faculty, and staff to members of the greater Charlottesville community. UVA faculty are producing research on inter-group dynamics in a longitudinal study using data collected through this project. Early results indicate that most people do not seek out these conversations, but after participating they are more optimistic on a societal level for moving past gridlock. Additional research findings are forthcoming. The Karsh Institute is interested in scaling this project and considering avenues for doing so, for example through self-facilitation or training students to become facilitators.

The Karsh Institute has also sponsored or co-sponsored several student-oriented dialogue events. For example, the TxD Dinner Series invited students from College Republicans and University Democrats to get to know one another across a meal. The School of Education and Human Development and the Karsh Institute partnered to host an event series on the role of civic education and free speech on college campuses. Over the course of the semester, they hosted three robust conversation events featuring speakers with diverse perspectives.



LOCATION:

Charlottesville, VA

TYPE:

Public

SIZE:

22,000

Appendix B:

List of Bridgebuilding Organizations and Brief Descriptions

Bipartisan Policy Center, Campus Free Expression Project

The Bipartisan Policy Center's (BPC's) Campus Free Expression Project (CFEP) works to restore open discourse on college campuses to create independent thinkers and engaged citizens. Drawing on the recommendations of BPC's Academic Leaders Task Force report, *Campus Free Expression: A New Roadmap*, BPC partners with college leaders to create campus-specific strategies to foster a welcoming environment for robust intellectual exchange through symposia, briefings, and events. BPC advises colleges on policies, programs, and curricula that foster students' skills and habits of mind to give a respectful hearing to contrary views, thinking for oneself, and forging constructive compromise across principled disagreement. In addition to working with college leaders, CFEP also educates decision-makers at all levels of government about approaches that support the free and open exchange of ideas in our nation's institutions of higher learning.

Bonner Program

The Bonner Program is a four-year, service-based college scholarship program that is developmental, intensive, and integrated across students' college experiences. The program recruits and supports a diverse pool of predominately low-income, first-generation students who are committed to changing the world through community engagement. The campus program model is cohort-based (5-40 students in each class), intensive (280+ hours per school year and, for most members, full-time summer service internships), and developmental (integrating experiential, curricular, and co-curricular service and learning leading to a capstone community-engagement project and a culminating reflection presentation).

Braver Angels

Braver Angels brings America together to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic republic.

BridgeUSA

BridgeUSA has a chapter model of student mobilization fostering a multipartisan student movement that champions viewpoint diversity, responsible discourse, and a solution-oriented political culture. BridgeUSA develops and trains individuals through chapters, pursues narrative change through campaigns, and builds shared community across the network through online events and in-person summits. Importantly, every BridgeUSA chapter is registered on campus and works directly with campus faculty and administration to institutionalize bridge building within campus culture.

Bridging the Gap

[Bridging the Gap](#) (BTG) is a program of Interfaith America. BTG is designed to reduce the polarization in our country by giving students, faculty, and administrators the skills they need to find common ground across deep divides while solving problems on their campuses and in their communities. BTG teaches students and campus professionals how to truly listen, understand, be heard, and seek common ground to positively impact their communities without comprising deeply held values. This approach involves skill-building, encounters, and direct application. The skills of listening, story-telling, and engaging tension constructively are at the heart of the BTG experience.

Appendix B (continued)

Constructive Dialogue Institute

Constructive Dialogue Institute offers a variety of resources for higher education, including

Perspectives: Perspectives is CDI's online, blended learning curriculum. Through eight personalized learning modules students develop the mindset and the skill sets to engage across differences. CDI conducted a randomized control trial in 2022 and found that students who used Perspectives improved in metrics related to polarization, openness to learning, conflict resolution, and psychological safety.

Faculty and staff professional development: CDI provides on-site and virtual training to faculty and staff in facilitating constructive dialogue.

Institutional support: CDI provides support to campuses looking to strengthen the dialogue and civic engagement of their communities by implementing Perspectives with significant percentages of their population, providing training for faculty and staff on leading constructive dialogue, and providing analytics and research support.

Essential Partners

Essential Partners' groundbreaking approach, Reflective Structured Dialogue (RSD), is the outcome of years of experimentation and innovation by the organization's founders, a group of behavioral health researchers and practitioners. In higher education, Essential Partners (EP) offers both a classroom adaptation that merges the tools and frameworks of RSD with research-based educational best practices as well as an intervention to transform the broader campus community culture. EP has trained, coached, and collaborated with faculty members, students, leadership, and administrators at every level of campus life. By empowering and equipping stakeholders within partner institutions, EP has supported campus-wide initiatives (e.g., Middlebury College, Bridgewater College, Sewanee) and the foundation of centers for dialogue (e.g., University of Colorado, Boulder, Tufts University) as well as more focused efforts at dozens of institutions and skill-building workshops for thousands of individual leaders and educators across the globe.

Greater Good Science Center, University of California Berkeley

The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley (GGSC) studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being and teaches skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society. Since 2001, the GGSC has provided a bridge between scientists and the public, turning research findings into practical resources for social and emotional well-being.

Since 2018, the GGSC's [Bridging Differences](#) initiative has mixed science and storytelling to help address one of the most urgent issues of our time: political and cultural polarization. Drawing on leading science and best practices from the field, the initiative has highlighted the key research-based principles for fostering positive dialogue, relationships, and understanding across group lines, including lines of faith, race, ethnicity, political ideology, and beyond. It has disseminated these findings via articles, videos, an [online course](#), a [Bridging Differences Playbook](#), and other multimedia resources reaching millions of people worldwide. It now runs communities of practice.

Heterodox Academy

Heterodox Academy (HxA) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization of thousands of faculty, staff, and students committed to advancing the principles of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement to improve higher education and academic research. We believe that in order to separate good ideas from bad, and to make good ideas better, it is essential for scholars and students to develop the habits of heart and mind necessary to evaluate claims, sources, and evidence; and to reason carefully and compassionately about the world. We gather and empower diverse academic insiders to advance open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement across higher education. We conduct research, develop resources, build communities, engage with leaders, and evaluate public conversations, working to re-shape the formal policies and informal norms that determine academic culture and practice.

Appendix B (continued)

Institute for Citizens and Scholars

The Institute for Citizens & Scholars cultivates talent, ideas, and networks that develop young people as effective, lifelong citizens. We unite the left, right, and center to develop breakthrough solutions that create stronger citizens in our country. We bring these solutions to life by forming strategic partnerships with an intentionally diverse group of young people, scholars and education leaders, and civic and business leaders—including the 27,000 world-leading Fellows in our network. Together, we're on a mission to ensure that Americans everywhere are civically well-informed, productively engaged, and committed to democracy. Recent contributions to the field include: “The Civic Outlook of Young Adults in America,” “From Civic Learning to a Civic Ecosystem,” and “Mapping Civic Measurement: How are we assessing readiness and opportunities for an engaged citizenry?”

Living Room Conversations

Living Room Conversations (LRC) connects individuals within communities and across differences to build understanding and trust. Its library of 160+ free conversation guides allow communities to adapt and scale bridging efforts sustainably. In Higher Ed, LRC has an engaged network of 30+ campuses adapting the model to fit local needs from course curriculum to student and resident life to DEIB efforts and campus-wide conversations. In addition to its library of guides, LRC offers training, program design support, and convenes a Higher Ed learning community.

Redeeming Babel

Redeeming Babel was founded in 2019 to address three underlying theological problems driving the chaos and confusion of our current world. Redeeming Babel identifies the three problems damaging Christians in their interior, institutional, and societal selves as: a mistaken spirituality of anxiety (interior); a missing theology of organizations (institutional); and a misshapen approach to politics (societal).

Since its inception, Redeeming Babel has woven insights at all three levels and guided Christian engagement with the broader world. For example, in 2021, we founded and spearheaded [Christians and the Vaccine](#), the leading national effort to persuade vaccine hesitant evangelicals. Our efforts addressed the anxiety felt by millions stemming from a distrust in institutions and countered the toxic politicization of a public health solution. Our theologically rich approach is accessible to all Christians through online courses, [short videos](#), the Good Faith podcast (Curtis Chang with friends), and a blog. Our current initiative, [The After Party: Towards Better Christian Politics](#), equips evangelicals to pursue a biblically faithful approach to politics that offers a hopeful alternative to the polarization currently besetting so many communities.

Sustained Dialogue Institute

The Sustained Dialogue Institute (SDI) was founded in 2002 to bridge ethnic, racial, and other cultural divisions. With a partner network of over 60 campuses, called the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, students, faculty, and staff learn a formal peacemaking process from SDI and connect with others using the process at network events. The mission of the Sustained Dialogue Institute is to develop leaders who are able to transform differences into the strong relationships essential to effective decision-making, democratic governance, and peace. Dialogue work takes three primary forms, volunteer dialogue circles (often an extra-curricular, student-led program), coursework using SD methodologies pedagogically, or in the form of student-led dialogue-to-action retreats. This work includes partners from across the globe seeking to remedy division on their campuses.

Appendix C:

Bridgebuilding Outcomes

This list is drawn from the evidence-based outcomes named by bridgebuilding organizations.

Knowledge

- Place- and Issue-Knowledge
- Well-informed

Experience

- Productively engaged in working for the common good
- Viewpoint diversity

Skills

- Conflict Resolution
- Constructive disagreement
- Critical thinking & perspective taking
- Decreased dichotomous thinking
- Equipped to engage across differences
- Healthy relationships and social cohesion
- Listening/communication
- Open inquiry
- Storytelling/sharing one's ethic of bridgebuilding
- Understanding others and being understood

Attitudes

- Affective polarization
- Appreciate complexity of identities, perspectives, & issues
- Feelings of connectedness to others
- Empathy
- Hopeful about democracy/civic agency & identity
- Hopes and plans for the future
- Intellectual humility
- Pluralistic norms
- Psychological safety
- Sense of belonging
- Willingness to engage across differences

Appendix D:

Definitions of Outcomes

Organizations' Definitions of Outcomes: Skills

Conflict Resolution

- A collection of processes, practices and skills that increase peaceful and just outcomes for individuals, groups, and communities. ([Sustained Dialogue SDI Conflict Management Skills Training, “Transformative Experience, Conflict Resolution, and Sustained Dialogue”](#))
- The process of reducing or eliminating the negative aspects of conflict and promoting the positive aspects of conflict. This involves managing and addressing the underlying issues and interests that are driving the conflict, as well as finding ways to effectively communicate and negotiate with the other parties involved. The ultimate goal of conflict resolution is to reach a mutually acceptable solution that satisfies the needs and interests of all parties involved ([Constructive Dialogue Institute](#), Perspectives e-learning program)

Constructive Disagreement

- Respect through the rigorous examination of ideas and assumptions, including one's own. ([Heterodox Academy](#))

Critical Thinking

- Student willingness to reconsider their opinion, based on others' perspectives shared in dialogic classroom environment. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Perspective Taking: The practice of considering alternate viewpoints to more fully understand one's own position and actions. (Sustained Dialogue SDI Conflict Management Skills Training, “[Sustained Dialogue and Civic Life: Post College Impacts](#)“)

Decrease Dichotomous Thinking

- The tendency to think in terms of polar opposites, without accepting the possibilities that lie between these two extremes. ([Constructive Dialogue Institute](#), Perspectives e-learning program)

Equipped to Engage Across Differences

- Post training/short term: knowledge of content and skills needed to engage across differences. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Long term: perceived shifts in communication patterns; capacity of a community to remain invested despite challenges (resilience) measured through longitudinal interviews. ([Essential Partners](#))

Healthy Relationships and Social Cohesion

- Short and long-term: sense of belonging or inclusion in the community; sense of cohesiveness of that community; improved trust; new/improved relationships across difference. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Healthy relationship building is defined as knowledge and skills to intentionally improving group dynamics by attention to patterns of interaction, power, identity, interests, and misperceptions. (Sustained Dialogue Full Training in the Sustained Dialogue Process, [A Public Peace Process](#))

Listening

- A core skill for bridgebuilding; a continuum of attentiveness, culminating in the skill of listening completely in order to understand another's meaning and message. ([Bridging the Gap](#))

Open inquiry

- The ability to ask questions, share ideas, and challenge popular views and assumptions. ([Heterodox Academy](#))

Self-reflection

- Consideration of one's own motives, actions, history, and behaviors, often requiring dedicated processing time within dialogue. (Sustained Dialogue Stage 2 of Dialogue Group Participation, “[Our Approach](#)“)

Appendix D (continued)

Storytelling

- The skill of sharing about oneself in a way that invites others to share. ([Bridging the Gap](#))

Understanding Others and Being Understood

- Post-dialogue/short term: how understood participants feel by those with different opinions/beliefs; how much participants understand others whose opinions/beliefs are different. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Long term: attitude and behavior change measured through longitudinal interviews. ([Essential Partners](#))

Organizations' Definitions of Outcomes: Attitudes

Affective Polarization

- Dislike, distrust, and avoidance of those who hold different political views. ([Constructive Dialogue Institute](#), Perspectives e-learning program)

Feelings of Connectedness to Others

- A core psychological need, feeling that one belongs to a group and generally feels close to other people. ([Greater Good Science Center](#))

Empathy

- Reflects on an experience from multiple perspectives and draws connections between self and the feelings, perspectives, or life experiences of different others. ([Bonner Program](#))

Hopeful about Democracy / Civic Agency

- Expresses a sense of hope about the future of democracy. ([Citizens & Scholars](#))
- Acts as an agent of change, working collaboratively with the community to positively impact a social issue or for the public good. ([Bonner Program](#))
- A longitudinal study on civic attitudes found SD participation shifted participants hopes and plans post-graduation. (Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, [Perrault, Diaz](#))

Intellectual Humility

- Student willingness to reconsider their opinion, based on others' perspectives shared in dialogic classroom environment. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Awareness of one's own intellectual limitations and a recognition of the value of others' intellect. ([Constructive Dialogue Institute](#), Perspectives e-learning program)

Psychological Safety

- The shared perception that it's safe to take interpersonal risks in a group. ([Constructive Dialogue Institute](#), Perspectives e-learning program)

Sense of Belonging

- Student sense of belonging in a dialogic classroom. ([Essential Partners](#))
- How much a person feels they belong in a group. ([Constructive Dialogue Institute](#), Perspectives e-learning program)

Willingness to Engage Across Differences

- Short term: willingness to engage across difference as a result of dialogue or training; hopefulness that dialogue skills can help their communities. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Long term: personal transformation: behavior change/ integration of skills/tools into their life/work measured through longitudinal interviews. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Student willingness to engage in classroom discussions, even when disagreements arise. ([Essential Partners](#))
- Willingness to voice one's experiences and interests with the goal to work collaboratively across differences. ([Sustained Dialogue](#) Campus Network, Stage 2 of SD process)
- Self-reported increased confidence in engaging people with diverse identities and divergent ideologies. ([Bridging the Gap](#))

Appendix E: Bridging Organizations Overview

Organization (founding years**)	# Staff	Higher Ed Audience* (HE)	Consulting	Learning resources	Monitoring evaluation	Network	Training	Cost	Reach
Bipartisan Policy Center's Campus Free Expression Project (2019)	3	F, S, SA	✓	Task Force Report			✓	Free of charge	150 campuses
Bonner Foundation & Program (1990)	6	C, Stu, S, F, SA	(members)	Library	✓	✓		Free of charge, requires time	75 campuses
Braver Angels (2016)	27	F, Stu, S, SA	✓	eCourses		✓	✓		75 campuses
BridgeUSA (2017)	14	F, Stu, SA	✓			✓	chapters	\$1000 for 2 semesters	50 campuses
Constructive Dialogue Institute (2017)	13	F, S, Stu	✓	Library	✓		✓	'Perspectives' is free for educators; Other costs vary	1,000+ institutions
Essential Partners (1989)	9	F, Stu, S, SA	✓	Library	MEL		✓	Costs vary	50 communities or schools
Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley (2001, 2018)	20	F, S	✓	Library		✓	✓	Free of charge	1 million users (10% Higher Ed)
Heterodox Academy (2015)	13	F, SA	✓	Library		✓		Free of charge	5,000 F, A, Stu
Institute for Citizens and Scholars (1945, 2020)	31	S, SA	✓	Reports		✓			27,000 Fellows
Living Room Conversations (2010)	8	C, Stu, S	✓	Trainings, Dialogue Guides			✓	Free of charge resources; consultation costs vary	30+ campuses, 5000+ students
Interfaith America (2002) & Bridging the Gap (2020)	53	F, S, SA, Stu	✓	Library		✓	✓	Free of charge; grants offered	600 campuses (50 BTG)
Redeeming Babel (2019)	6	C, F, S, SA, Stu	✓	Courses		✓	✓	\$49/course (covers all participants)	
Sustained Dialogue Institute (2002)	13	F, S, SA, Stu	✓		✓	✓	✓		60 campuses

*(A) Alumni, (C) Community, (F) Faculty, (Stu) Students, (S) Staff, SA (Senior Administrator)

**If an organization had a founding year and another when they expanded their work in a substantial way to integrate bridgebuilding, both are included.

Note: Several of these organizations continue to grow quickly; this information reflects reporting from spring 2023.

Appendix F:

Higher Education Associations

The following higher education associations contributed to the Landscape Analysis by participating in an informational conversation and/or attending the May 2023 convening.

American Academy of Arts and Sciences

American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC)

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

American Council on Education (ACE)

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU)

Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB)

Campus Compact

Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition (CLDE Coalition)

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU)

Council of Independent Colleges (CIC)

National Association of System Heads (NASH)

Veritas Forum

