



College Debates and Discourse Alliance

A Brief Overview

What is the CD&D Alliance?

The CD&D Alliance, a joint initiative of the **American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA)**, **Braver Angels**, and **BridgeUSA**, teaches thousands of students and faculty to embrace ideological diversity, foster respectful civil discourse on hundreds of college campuses, and cultivate leaders to carry the movement forward.

Core Program Elements include:

- **Braver Angels College Debates and Braver Campus Dialogues**, which can be launched at scale on college campuses and in classrooms.
- A **Curricular Toolkit**, enabling faculty to integrate debates and dialogues into coursework across almost any subject taught in the classroom.
- **Training workshops and eCourses** that teach college faculty, staff, and student leaders how to chair debates and dialogues.
- Customized integration of debates, dialogues, and training workshops into major campus activities like **freshman orientation**.

What are the responsibilities of students, faculty or organizations that want to host a debate or dialogue?

- Students and faculty choose the date, time, and location for a campus or classroom event.
- In collaboration with the CD&D team, students, faculty, or sponsoring organizations select a topic, develop resolutions or guiding questions, and work to recruit opening speakers.
- For campus events, the CD&D team can create Eventbrite listings, flyers, and promotional materials to help students to publicize the event on campus.



- To plan debates or dialogues as an engaging classroom assignment, faculty use our  **Curricular Toolkit**.
- Our process is collaborative, efficient, and geared to economize students' and faculty members' time.



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Debate and Dialogue Descriptions

What is a Braver Angels College Debate?

Braver Angels College Debates provide a transformative experience for students, highlighted by deep listening, critical thinking and thoughtful communication. Engaging with their peers in a guided setting, students debate around polarizing topics, and come away with profound appreciation for free expression and viewpoint diversity.

Braver Angels College Debates are immersive, non-competitive, and highly participatory. Conducted in a light parliamentary format, they teach students to express their views, and engage respectfully around the most challenging political and social issues dividing our nation today.

Held in-person or online, debates typically run between one to two hours. They are led by an experienced chairperson, trained by the CD&D team.

Centering around a debate resolution that will elicit a balanced split of opinions, the debate is launched by several opening speakers, who are selected in advance to speak in favor of or against the resolution. After they conclude, everyone in the room is welcome to present arguments and answer questions from audience participants.

What is A Braver Campus Dialogue (ABCD)?

This new format of civil discourse programming draws inspiration from traditional Braver Angels Debates and workshops, BridgeUSA conversations, and visionary collaboration with Braver Angels co-founder Bill Doherty.

Braver Campus Dialogues delve into the most pressing social and political challenges of our day, but do not use the traditional negation and affirmation format of Braver Angels Debates.

While the respectful atmosphere and parliamentary format of debates is maintained, the conversation that unfolds is animated by a spirited exploration of issues, ideas and solutions.

Guided by an experienced moderator, participants navigate the intricate complexities of an issue, gain deeper understanding of its root causes, and explore potential solutions together.

The moderator opens this 90-minute session by introducing participants to core norms and guidelines for engagement. The main conversation consists of two parts.

Part 1: Introducing the Issue

What is at the heart of this issue for you?

- Reflection
- Group discussion

During Part 1, participants share their personal perspectives on the issue.

Part 2: Solution-Oriented Conversation

What solution(s) could address this issue?

- Reflection
- Group discussion

During Part 2, participants consider the merits of different proposed ideas.



At the conclusion of Braver Angels College Debates as well as Braver Campus Dialogues, participants engage in a lively, informal debrief session — an opportunity to reflect on their experience and share what most inspired them.



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If you have further questions or interest in hosting a debate or dialogue on your campus, contact:

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