



College Debates and Discourse Alliance

A Brief Overview

What is the CD&D Alliance?

The **College Debates and Discourse (CD&D) Alliance**, an initiative of the **American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA)**, runs an expansive national program that teaches students and faculty to honor ideological diversity, foster civil discourse on college campuses, and develop as leaders to carry the movement forward.

Core Program Elements include:

- **Braver 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 College Debate?

Braver 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 College Debates are **immersive, non-competitive, and highly participatory**.

Conducted in a **light parliamentary format**, CD&D trained debate Chairs teach students to engage respectfully around challenging issues dividing our nation today.

The debate is **launched by a set of opening speakers**, chosen in advance to speak in favor of or against the resolution.

Each speaker takes **2-4 minutes to present** their argument, then answers questions from audience participants, who address their questions to the chair.

After the opening speeches conclude, **all participants in the room are invited to make speeches** and ask questions.

What is a Braver Campus Dialogue?

This **new format of civil discourse programming** draws inspiration from traditional Braver College Debates, 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 College Debates.

The dialogue format is particularly well-suited for topics that may generate less polarization than traditional debate resolutions yet still merit **thoughtful analysis and substantive discussion**.

While the respectful atmosphere and parliamentary format are maintained through a **trained CD&D moderator**, participants navigate the intricacies of an issue, gain a deeper understanding of its root causes, and explore consider potential pathways forward.

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?

- Partner 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?

- Partner reflection
- Group discussion

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



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



COLLEGE DEBATES AND DISCOURSE ALLIANCE
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If you have further questions or interest in hosting a debate or dialogue, contact:

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