

How to Create Impactful and Critical Diversity Dialogue on Your Campus

*University of Houston System Student Affairs and
Enrollment Services Leadership Conference*

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University of Houston  Clear Lake

The choice
is clear.

Erika García, M.Ed.

Dynamics of intersectionality, privilege, and marginalization

- She/her/hers/ella
- Cis-gendered
- Heterosexual
- Able-bodied
- U.S. Citizen
- English
- Formal education
- Two-parent household
- Latinx
- First-generation student
- Daughter of immigrants
- Woman of color
- Lower SES
- Spanish
- Racially ambiguous
- Agnostic/ atheist

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Diversity Climate in Higher Education Institutions

How many of you feel that diversity, identity, and inclusion themes, instances, or issues have increased on your campus?

How many of you feel that diversity, identity, and inclusion themes, instances, or issues have increased in higher education overall?

Has there been a marked increase in student advocacy, demonstrations, or events pertaining to social justice?

Has there been a marked increase in student advocacy, demonstrations, or events pertaining to expressing protected, yet controversial speech?

Do you think minoritized students feel increased tension/stress over the last few years on college campuses?

Why?

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National Diversity Setting

[According to the Southern Poverty Law Center](#), FBI Hate Crime Statistics as of December 2016 record a 5% increase in hate crime incidents from 2015 to 2016, a 5 year high.

- *Compared to 2015, 2016 saw a 25% increase between October and December.*
- *Problem: eighty-eight (88) percent of participating law enforcement agencies report zero hate crimes*

[According to the 2016 FBI Hate Crime Statistics](#), highlights include the following:

- *Of the 4,229 offenses within Race/Ethnicity bias, 50% were anti-Black.*
- *Of the 1,538 offenses within Religious bias, 54% were anti-Jewish, 24.8 were anti-Islam (Muslim).*
- *Of the 1,218 offenses within Sexual Orientation bias, 62.8% were anti-gay (male), and 21.5% were anti-group (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans) bias.*

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, [anti-Muslim hate crimes](#) incidence has increased:

- *2014-2015: 67%*
- *2015-2016: 19%*

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Diversity/Inclusion Setting in Higher Education

ADMINISTRATION

AUGUST 21, 2017

How One White Nationalist Became — and Remains — a Thorn in Texas A&M's Side

ADMINISTRATION

MAY 16, 2018

Texas State U. Police Chief Resigns Amid Racial Tensions on Campus

STUDENTS

MAY 10, 2018

A White Student Called the Police on a Black Student Who Was Napping. Yale Says It's 'Deeply Troubled.'

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

APRIL 10, 2018

Most College Presidents Worry That Speech Issues Could Trigger Violence

STUDENTS

FEBRUARY 01, 2018

'White Supremacists Are Targeting College Campuses Like Never Before'

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The University of Houston Clear Lake

Spring 2017:

Ethnic Origin

White	3,107 (37.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	2,487 (30.0%)
Black	672 (8.1%)
International	1,138 (13.7%)
Other	890 (10.7%)

International Students

Enrollment	1,138
# of countries represented	37
6 countries with greatest enrollment:	

India, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, China, Taiwan, Nigeria

Fall 2017:

Ethnic Origin

White	3,228 (37.8%)
Hispanic/Latino	2,776 (32.5%)
Black	689 (8.1%)
International	894 (10.5%)
Other	955 (11.1%)

International Students

Enrollment	894
# of countries represented	43
6 countries with greatest enrollment:	

India, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, China, Nigeria, Taiwan

Spring 2018:

Ethnic Origin

White	3,145 (38.5%)
Hispanic/Latino	2,700 (33.1%)
Black	678 (8.3%)
International	697 (8.5%)
Other	943 (11.6%)

International Students

Enrollment	697
# of countries represented	36
6 countries with greatest enrollment:	

India, Vietnam, China, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Taiwan

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What prompted diversity dialogue at UHCL?

Student organizations felt that there was not enough on-campus dialogue to discuss current social and political topics.

Students felt there was no space on campus to dialogue about the very real traumas experienced by minoritized individuals – particularly in the face of an increasingly charged political and racial climate.

Not enough opportunities for students to connect and be supported by faculty/staff of shared identities.

Not a strong relationship between the diversity office and faculty whose disciplines overarch with diversity/identity work.

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Diversity Dialogue Events

Date:	Title:	Attendance:
Spring 2017	Latinos: A Discussion on Important Topics	12
	The Black Experience: An Open Conversation	27
	Election Results: Let's Talk	30
Fall 17	The Indian Experience	18
	MASC: Toxic Masculinity	13
	The Latinx Experience	30
	The Muslim Experience	32
Spring 2018	13th, documentary	24
	A Conversation on the Black Experience	47
	LGBTQ+ Experience	25
	The Asian Experience	19

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Components of Effective Critical Dialogue

Dialogue is facilitated by a faculty or staff member who identifies with the demographic of discussion

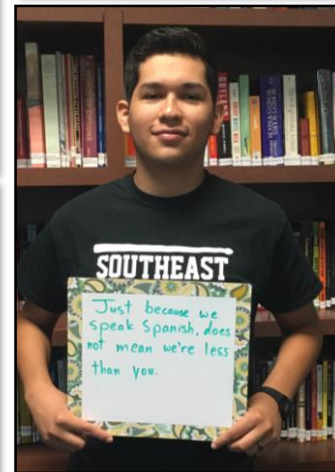
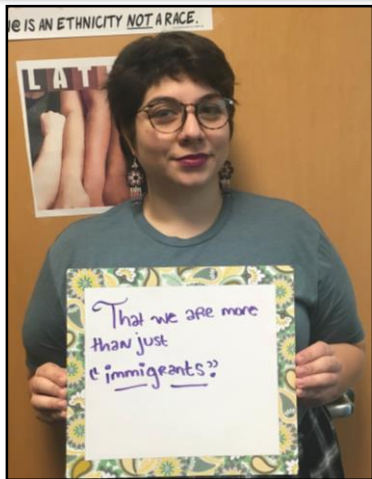
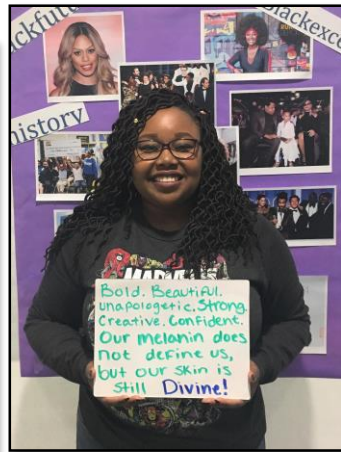
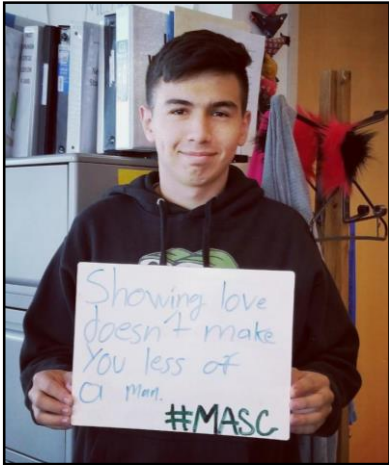


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Components of Effective Critical Dialogue

Marketing and identity-centered social media campaigns



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Components of Effective Critical Dialogue

A student planning committee and/or members of a student organization who identify with the demographic compile the topics for discussion

The Muslim Experience:

- Hijab vs. Niqab vs. Burka
- Islam is a religion, not a race
- Muslims live everywhere, not just the middle east
- “It’s just a scarf!”
- Islam is practiced differently according to culture

The Indian Experience:

- 22 languages
- Huge ethnic diversity
- Hugely populated country
- Religious/racial diversity across the country

The Black Experience

- Cultural appropriation
- Being “woke”
- Colin Kaepernick
- Notions of patriotism
- Confederate statues

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Components of Effective Critical Dialogue

Incorporate “Step forward and step back” and re-center the identity of discussion

Frame experiences around intersectionality, privilege, and marginalization

Address and unpack the nuances within discomfort

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What does assessment and evaluation reveal?

On our Latino-centered dialogues:

- “Race is what the world says I am. Ethnicity is who I say I am.”
- “Finally learned what Latinx was.”
- “I wasn’t aware how much pressure people face from our own culture to resist change.”
- “Colorism and how people think of lighter and darker skin.”
- “Hearing people’s experiences that are so similar to my own.”
- “This conversation went by too fast. More please.”
- “ I would love a part II”
- “Least favorite part: not long enough”
- “Would like to have more Conversations like this.”
- “Please continue these!”
- “I’d be interested in another discussion.”

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What does assessment and evaluation reveal?

On our Black-centered dialogue:

- “Being able to speak freely about experiences we all share.”
- “Talking about what it means to be Black.”
- “Please continue to have these conversations.”
- “Hearing perspectives on Black Lives Matter – this has been an insightful experience.”
- “I’m happy people at UHCL want to engage in this conversation.”
- “Knowing that I am not alone.”
- “The fact that it actually happened!”
- “I didn’t know there was this many Black people at UHCL.”

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What does assessment and evaluation reveal?

On our Indian-centered dialogue:

- “I didn’t know there was so much history of Indian immigration.”
- “Loved discussing openly.”
- “My favorite part is when students who live the experience share their experience.”
- “I’m surprised so many non-Indian people are so interested in learning about India.”
- “I realized Americans are also misunderstood and propagated wrongly in Indian media.”
- “What then is ‘American’?”
- “I wanted it to be longer.”
- “We finally get to clarify about how big and diverse India is!”

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What does assessment and evaluation reveal?

On our Muslim-centered dialogue:

- “It’s good to get conversation between Muslims and non-Muslims”
- “My favorite part is clarifying misconceptions of Muslims and Islam.”
- “I hoped I know more English to speak about my religion.”
- “I liked that we discussed the experiences of Muslim men not just women.”
- “I want to hear about other minorities in the Muslim community – such as LGBTQ+ and those who converted to Islam.”
- “This event helped me – thank you.”
- “My favorite part was all of the Muslim women who opened up and shared their experiences.”
- “I wish we had more time.”
- “My favorite part was sharing funny hijab stories.”
- “What does it mean to be American?”

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What does assessment and evaluation reveal?

On our masculinity-centered dialogue:

- “How I have some really ignorant male friends”
- “As I grow up and become a man, my perspective has changed.”
- “I need to be more open.”
- “I need to be more aware of why I do certain things, and why I react a certain way. Our ideas of masculinity do influence decisions.”
- “I feel like a better man.”
- “Living up to masculinity can make you depressed.”
- “This is hard to express but my inner self, around women, if they are in the discussion...it’s just a guy thing.”
- “Now I know I am not alone in this.”
- “All men want healthy masculinity in the world, but because we do not gather and talk about it, we never practice it.”

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My Observations

Student participants have grown more comfortable in actively participating on discussions of identity and diversity.

Students of the minoritized identities feel validated, supported, and an increased sense of belonging on campus.

Events have not gained much traction with student of conservative ideologies.

Students and student organizations on campus are now leading their own critical dialogues!

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What's Next

Critical Whiteness Studies – Dr. Robin DiAngelo.

Nonreligious/agnostic/atheist identities

Intersectionality or multiracial, bicultural, bilingual identities

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Thanks!!!

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