

Diving In:
*A Handbook for Improving Race Relations on College
Campuses Through the Process of Sustained Dialogue*

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Table of Contents

Preface	2
Introduction	5
Stage One: <i>Deciding to Engage</i>	7
Stage Two: <i>Mapping and Naming Problems and Relationships</i>	13
Stage Three: <i>Probing Problems and Relationships to Choose a Direction</i>	19
Stage Four: <i>Scenario Building</i>	23
Stage Five: <i>Acting Together</i>	26
Appendix 1: <i>Flowchart of Sustained Dialogue Phases</i>	31
Appendix 2: <i>Covenant</i>	32
Appendix 3: <i>Sample Retreat Agenda</i>	33
Appendix 4: <i>Sample Meeting Agenda</i>	34
Appendix 5: <i>Concept of Relationship</i>	35

Preface

This handbook addresses the social problem of racial differences on college campuses. The methods and experiences that follow provide *means* and, perhaps more importantly, *hope* to anyone interested in changing and improving the relationships among races on their own campus.

Is race a problem on American college campuses? Absolutely. The campuses of American colleges and universities are, after all, a microcosm of American society. And, although great strides have been made over this country's history to improve the relationships among different races, a person's race often still defines identity, self-image, and place within a community – including the college community.

Race relations on college campuses can be a very serious issue because, in so many ways, college is a clash of cultures. Students leave the environments they know to enter an environment where their peers express dramatically different perceptions of reality than those to which they are accustomed. In some instances, people that had never been exposed to racial minorities suddenly have to adapt to new kinds of diversity. At other times, minority students that had never before been in the minority within their own communities must face environments that are not as welcoming as those from which they came.

Most often, race problems on college campuses are anything but clear-cut. Rather, in many instances, problems smolder below the surface where a majority of students cannot or choose not to see them. In an environment where issues of social life are often of high personal priority, the structure of student body institutions can be such that they exclude different members of the larger community. Insular subcultures can develop among fraternities and sororities, sports teams, other student organizations, or racial groups that possess one perception of the campus landscape and are insensitive, even oblivious to the existence of other cultures. This also means that these groups' members do not see the ways in which the existence of their insular groups creates conditions of exclusion and ignorance that cause problems.

That said, it is also important to recognize some important differences between the college environment and the larger American community. For one, college campuses can be considered relative hotbeds of enthusiasm and optimism. Students build off of their peers and the intense excitement of their experience and, in turn, often feel they can accomplish anything. Moreover, one's college career most often begins and ends in four years. Not only does this translate into one seeking to maximize one's own experience within the campus community, but it also translates into a more malleable community dynamic. Students come and then are gone in just a few short years. While student legacies in the form of tradition often live on beyond individual college careers, the idea of a "four-year revolving door" lends credibility to the expectation that a campus climate can be changed significantly as each outgoing class graduates and each incoming class matriculates.

But, how? Where does one dive in? The problem of race relations in any community seems too complex to tackle from any starting point. This is certainly true on college campuses where a microcosm of society at large exists and the issues that we face are as serious and real as those facing the rest of the world.

Racism is a profound human problem rooted in the complex sphere of human relationships. When one realizes this, it becomes apparent that no government can solve racism with laws, nor can any one race do it without the cooperation of others.

Such is the case on college campuses as well. While a university's administration can say a great deal about the importance of improving race relations on its campus, the administrative body is likely to have neither the time nor the resources to address this problem effectively. Just as the primary purpose for the national government is to provide law and order for its citizens, a university administration's primary goal is to provide the best possible education for its students. Of course, in this process of providing an education to its students, it is necessary for a University administration to create a wholesome climate in which learning can occur. However, it is impossible for the administrators of a University to create any regulation that will change the interpersonal relationships among the students on its campus. Relationships are governed more by emotions than reason, and as a result are not easily influenced by regulation. Relationships are established and evolve by personal contact. In the case of a University, the administration does not have the human resources to execute the necessary personal contact. By default, the task of changing contentious campus relationships lies in the hands of the students.

There are intrinsic qualities of the college campus community that make it different from society at large and indeed can make it an excellent venue for social change. As a community that renews itself every four years, college campuses have a quick cycle of acculturation as well as a short institutional memory. Students enter the college environment with a set of preconceptions about the world, views that adapt to the college environment as they pass through the institution. As freshmen, they see upperclassmen in positions of leadership. As they move through the institution they gradually take on the roles they saw their predecessors playing and act along the same lines. Therefore, race relations, along with many other social issues, can change dramatically over a short period of time particularly when the role models provided by upperclassmen set standards for positive social change. These facts should empower students as it means that we can have a meaningful impact on our campuses in our time there.

At the same time, college campuses represent a learning environment where we prepare ourselves to take responsibility for our individual lives in the world beyond school. College campuses are a place where we develop the patterns of thought and interaction that will guide how we view many social issues, including race relations, throughout our lives. Therefore, beyond improving the quality of community on one campus, emphasis on creating inter-racial acceptance in a college environment will translate into greater acceptance in society as a whole as students move forward in their lives.

In the experience of the authors, Sustained Dialogue, a process developed by Dr. Harold Saunders, can be among students' most effective weapons for combating racial conflict on college campuses. The concepts are very simple, but their careful implementation can have powerful and sophisticated results.

Sustained Dialogue is a flexible tool that can be used to approach a broad range of campus race relations issues. One purpose of Sustained Dialogue is to give you a place to dive in. Sustained Dialogue separates itself from other projects that seek to ameliorate

ethnic and racial conflict in a very simple regard: it is sustained. The process engrosses all who become involved and carries them toward possible methods for combating the issue of racial tension on campus. As the process progresses, one realizes that it can be self-proliferating. As such, simply getting the process started is taking one giant step in the right direction toward improving race relations.

In the pages that follow, you will find an explanation of Sustained Dialogue and suggestions for how it can be used on your college campus. What you will read is the product of two and a half years of experience that we have had adapting and using Sustained Dialogue in our community at Princeton University. When Sustained Dialogue was originated on the Princeton campus, its initiators worked tirelessly to ensure its success. At times, it seemed as if it would fail. Organizers found it difficult to maintain the participants' interest and ensure both sides of dialogue productivity – emotional growth and generation of solutions.

However, in the end, all involved have persevered and have been rewarded with beautiful results. Many on campus now say that awareness of racial issues at Princeton is greater than ever before. With the amount of energy surrounding the issue now present, we can see small changes already taking place with larger strides on the horizon. As a result of the efforts of all the program's participants, Sustained Dialogue as a campus group was awarded the 2001 *Daily Princetonian* Service Award, given by the school newspaper to an individual or, uniquely in this case, to an organization that has done most in service of the Princeton community. This award, in addition to being a tremendous honor, furthers one of the main goals of Sustained Dialogue: to increase awareness of racism as an issue. As you read, we hope that you will gain an understanding of this process and marshal what we have learned to employ this powerful tool, and generate change on your campus in the direction you see fit.

Introduction: What is Sustained Dialogue?

Sustained Dialogue is a process for improving relationships within a community that are strained along racial or ethnic lines. Its approach focuses on probing the dynamics of troubled community relationships to better understand them and formulate actions for improving them.

A relationship exists between two groups of people when one group positively or negatively impacts the lives of the other over time. By bringing together concerned community members from all sides of contentious relationships, Sustained Dialogue, under the guidance of a moderator, allows participants to explore their problems in a non-confrontational setting. This is not a form of mediation or negotiation in which two sides attempt to come to an agreement. Instead, it is a cooperative exercise in which all participants share their own views and experiences and attempt to learn from others.

This does not mean that conversations are tame or that the emotions are blunted. Indeed, for many participants, Sustained Dialogue provides their first opportunity to share with representatives of a perpetrating group the experiences that have caused them pain. Meetings can, in fact, be quite heated, but the purpose of the dialogue is to deepen the group's understanding of the relevant problems.

Sustained Dialogue is not "just talk", rather it is "talk with a purpose." Participants are attempting to work through the dynamics of relations so that they can formulate actions to improve them. Though all participants are present because they see an interest in addressing the issues on the table, these conversations are not just "preaching to the choir." By working through a community's problem, the Sustained Dialogue group becomes a new source of power within the community that can provide solutions.

As a methodology, Sustained Dialogue works through five stages. These five stages were outlined by Dr. Harold Saunders, and are meant to represent the natural phases through which discussions pass among groups in conflict. These are not rigid steps that must be followed, but a gradual process through which groups pass. This passage is not a linear progression, and groups should expect to move back and forth as needed.

In the first stage, interested students should develop a plan for establishing dialogue groups on their campus and gather participants for those groups. Once individual groups are formed, the group's leaders should ensure that each participant understands the process. Then, groups move into stage two, and conversations begin. This stage is often called the "downloading" phase, as it is typified by participants sharing personal experiences and seemingly "getting things off their chest."

The moderator will notice a change in the character of conversation as the dialogue progresses into stage three. Here, participants are beginning to understand each other's experiences with race and are able to link each individual's experiences into a web of concepts that enables a better understanding of racism. With this understanding of the problem, the group then moves into stage four, where they generate possible solutions to the problem. In stage five, the final stage, group members turn suggestions into action. (See Appendix 1 for a visual representation of the stages.)

It is important to note that these stages are a conceptualization of human experience and by no means represent a rigid framework. Rather, the stages are presented here in order to give a moderator some guidance on how the dialogue should be directed in order to reach the most desirable ends. As will be described throughout the following pages, the moderator has the difficult duty of facilitating both the emotional satisfaction that participants gain from the sharing of personal experiences and maintaining a pragmatic perspective of the direction in which the conversations need to move. In the end, however, as our experiences show, you can see some very beautiful results.

Stage One: Deciding to Engage

It is important to note that attempting to begin Sustained Dialogue on a college campus will be time-consuming and often frustrating. As you set out, you must recognize that without patience, perseverance, and energy the dialogue will not get started. In the course of our work we found that there were times when it appeared that our efforts to establish groups would fail. Just remember that demonstrating your own commitment through constant efforts will affirm others' faith in the process. Also, the rewards that come from your efforts will certainly make them worthwhile.

The primary goals of stage one are to (1) be sure that potential group leaders are comfortable moderating a Sustained Dialogue group, (2) find a group of 8 to 12 potential participants who represent key viewpoints or constituencies on campus, (3) agree as a group to commit to regular meetings every 2 to 4 weeks throughout the school year, and (4) agree to the rules of the dialogue.

This section describes the issues and questions that you must confront as you begin the dialogue process. Chronologically, you will need to think about:

- How to initiate the dialogue.
- The dialogue's leaders.
- Recruiting participants.
- How do you gain commitment from participants for the dialogue process?
- Identifying and gathering resources.
- Building trust.

I) Initiating the Dialogue

You must first decide who will initiate Sustained Dialogue on your college campus. As a concerned student, you have enough weight or authority to begin the process on your own. At the same time, the efforts required for beginning the dialogue are so great that you might find it useful to form a coalition from the beginning. A group of concerned students from different backgrounds and with different reasons for being interested in addressing the community's problems can be more effective than an individual. This is not just because of the greater quantity of able bodies, but also because a greater number of initiators can offer a wider network of contacts, in turn increasing effectiveness in convincing potential participants.

A coalition of concerned organizations can be quite effective in initiating the dialogue because they can lend both physical resources and prestige to the effort. On our campus, dialogue groups were convened through a cooperative effort by the Undergraduate Student Government and the Dean of Student Life's Office. It is important to remember, however, that regardless of who initiates it, Sustained Dialogue must have a life of its own and must exist independently of any organizations that initiated it in order to maintain credibility once it gets started. Participants emerge as individuals speaking only for themselves. They do not represent any organization, although they, of course, reflect the perspectives of the groups they identify with. The coalition that begins the dialogue must therefore be prepared to merge with other

participants once the dialogue begins. This will be discussed in greater depth later in this section.

II) The Dialogue's Leaders

As you move toward establishing Sustained Dialogue groups, you need to begin to think about whom will take the lead throughout the process. A well-balanced and well-run group will proceed through meetings without any one person dominating the discussion. At the very beginning, however, the group needs to agree upon who will play the role of the moderator.

The moderator need not necessarily be one of the initiators of the dialogue, but this person does need to be familiar with the process. Thus, at least one of the moderators generally will be among the originators. He or she should be well respected by the group and willing to take on the additional burdens of both organizing the meetings and molding the dialogue in a number of ways. Generally, the moderator's responsibilities include:

- Facilitating discussion within the group both overtly and covertly in order to keep the group on track.
- Evaluating the composition of the group; without a cohesive group dynamic and a variety of perspectives, the group will seem to lack direction and energy.
- Leading conversation where necessary.
- Giving out homework assignments
- Scheduling meeting times and locations in consultation with the group.
- Helping to ensure that ground rules established in the beginning are followed.

Because the moderator is often also a participant in the dialogue, it may be advantageous to have more than one moderator. That way, these co-moderators can alternate taking the lead when one of them is too personally engaged in the discussion to provide guided leadership. In our dialogues, we supplemented our student moderators with interested non-students (members of the administration) who could provide a more objective perspective at times.

Try to think about engaging the entire group in running itself. Moderators or other leaders within the group should not become so bogged down in administrative details that they cease to gain from the process. Delegation is key, and simple tasks like taking notes and e-mailing them to the group can serve to further engage participants.

It is important that newcomers to the dialogue feel that the group as a whole values their input into the dialogue's direction. Initiators must, therefore, be willing to relinquish control to the entire group.

This handbook is largely addressed to potential moderators. In our first year of implementing Sustained Dialogue, moderators participated in a training session with a developer of the process. While this session was vital in energizing and informing the initiators of Sustained Dialogue on our campus, it was not a prerequisite for establishing dialogue groups. The tips and helpful hints presented throughout these pages should provide an adequate knowledge base for a group of interested students to successfully

establish Sustained Dialogue on a college campus and generate discussion on how the process can succeed.

III) Recruiting Participants

Once you have created a coalition of concerned students to initiate the dialogue, you must turn to the task of finding participants. Sustained Dialogue can only be successful if the participants represent all key viewpoints within the community and if these people are relatively well respected among their respective groups. Dialogue groups that are most successful have enough participants that no important perspective is excluded, but are small enough that everyone can take part. From our experience, between 8 and 12 is the optimal number of people for a group. As you begin finding participants, you should first sit down and think about which groups should be represented and any individuals who might be particularly qualified to contribute.

The most important aspects of finding participants are flexibility and personal contact. We began our process thinking very institutionally. As such, our first targeted participants were leaders of student organizations that represented different interest groups on campus. This approach was successful in that it gave us solid leads for attracting a diverse and concerned group of people. What we found, however, is that the leaders of these organizations, while well placed to take part in the dialogue, were often too busy with their own activities to make a steady commitment. In the end, it was only by casting our nets wide enough and telling as many key people as we could about the initiative that participants emerged. Often the names of these people came as recommendations from other student leaders. In some cases, they came to us as volunteers who had heard about Sustained Dialogue along the way. In the end, the best way to begin finding participants was to be as open minded and inclusive as possible and not be afraid of following unconventional leads.

Once you have a list of potential participants, however, you must get them to agree to participate. Our suggested method for doing this is to begin Sustained Dialogue on your campus with a *retreat* of some kind. As one approaches students about engaging in a dialogue on race relations that meets on a regular and consistent basis one immediately encounters two major reasons for resistance. First, there is the issue of time commitment. On any college campus students are going to be busy with other responsibilities. Classes and responsibilities to teams or student organizations take up valuable time, making it understandable that students are often reluctant to give up additional time for further undertakings. This is the reason that will most often be given by students and it is often also used as a substitute to cover up the second reason – that race relations is a difficult subject to talk about. It is not surprising that many people will be reluctant or afraid to make themselves vulnerable by talking about experiences that have caused them pain with groups that they possibly perceive as responsible for it. At the same time, many students will be unwilling to talk about race relations because they do not see a problem. This is also to be expected in a situation where insular groups or a self perceived campus mainstream are not conscious of the existence of the strained dynamic among other groups on campus.

Approaching potential participants with an invitation to a retreat rather than a request for commitment is an easy way of initiating dialogue because it offers potential

participants an opportunity to “test drive” Sustained Dialogue before they make a final decision. Students concerned about time commitment are more likely to agree to attend a day of meetings at first than to join an entire process. Once at the retreat, it is likely that they will be drawn in by strength of the process and thus be more willing to make a more serious time commitment.

In the same way, students reluctant to talk about race relations for a variety of reasons may be willing to attend one retreat. Once there, students unaware of a problem will have a chance to see first hand that their peers believe there is indeed a problem. At the same time, students reluctant to talk about their experiences will see more clearly the benefits of dialogue and be more likely to commit.

Our retreats have generally been four to six hours long and organized in two parts. We have begun with a description of Sustained Dialogue as a process. Sustained Dialogue is a very complex methodology and while it is possible to describe it in a brief conversation with potential participants, it generally takes a longer discussion of the underlying process to equip students with the knowledge base to engage in it. In our experience, we were lucky enough to have had Dr. Harold Saunders, one of the creators of the process, as a motivational/informational speaker at the beginning of the retreat. We then have turned the retreat over to the potential participants and asked them to reflect on their own experiences and relationships. This initial engagement has generally been what has won over many initial doubters. (For a sample retreat agenda, see Appendix 3.)

The ultimate goal of such an opening event should be to present people with a process and instill in them a sense of hope that their engagement in it can make things better. By taking people out of their everyday environment and throwing them together, you place them in a situation where they can be inspired. Think about ways that you can make people’s initial exposure to Sustained Dialogue one that creates hope. One possibility would be to bring in outside speakers that carry with them authority by experience.

Regardless of how you decide to initiate Sustained Dialogue on your campus, you need to be willing to “pound the pavement” and make contact with as many people as possible. Your commitment will make others willing to try it out. Tell students what Sustained Dialogue is and what it will address. When you run into resistance, be ready to focus people’s attention on the problems that exist. We found the best way to talk to our peers was to use vivid examples. If you are having lunch with a potential participant, for example, and he or she is unwilling to acknowledge the existence of a problem, you can point to the dining hall and ask the student why all the tables are racially segregated.

IV) Building Commitment

Once you have the participants, you need to figure out how to keep them. Commitment is something that must be built up like momentum. Hopefully, if you have chosen to hold some kind of initial event, you will have built up a base of interest that you can work off of. In our case, we then set the first meeting following the retreat as the day by which people needed to commit for the year. In order to build momentum you need to think about how you can decrease the kinds of inconveniences that will give people reason not to attend while deepening their personal investment in the process.

The first part can largely be accomplished through intelligent logistical planning in order to fit the dialogues to the needs of the group. We worked hard to make Sustained Dialogue as convenient for its participants as possible. Because dinner is a necessary expenditure of time, our meetings were all scheduled to take place during meals. Participants came to meetings knowing exactly when they would end and time limits for meeting were strictly enforced. The simplest thing that we did along these lines to maintain commitment was to never leave a meeting without having scheduled the next one. By having the entire group present when the next date is set, participants can plan ahead and the group makes a collective commitment to see each other again. It might be useful to agree in the beginning on one given day and time and frequency per month when participants will meet. (See Appendix 4 for a sample meeting agenda.)

Creating personal investment in the process will be discussed in greater depth in the next section. It is important to remember that this is something that must be done at every stage. In the beginning, you should make participants relate their involvement in Sustained Dialogue to their own experiences. This is a chance for them to explore pain that they have experienced. Only when they are making the process their own can they proceed through it. In addition, as will be discussed later, initiators of the dialogue should be wary of making the process seem too much as theirs. You should be willing and ready to let new participants take a leading role.

V) Identifying and Gathering Resources

Before you jump into the dialogue you will also need to worry about the mundane logistical details that must be considered to make Sustained Dialogue possible. Retreats, meetings, and other efforts require a commitment of resources. Something you will need from the beginning is a space where you can hold regular meetings. It is very important that whatever space you select offers privacy and intimacy. Participants should feel as if they can speak freely there and it should be set up in such a way that everyone is physically included in the conversation. If you choose to meet during meals you need to consider where the food will come from. In addition, as you move into later stages you may wish to have funds at your disposal to hold a public event or have a special meeting.

From our experience, we found that the idea of Sustained Dialogue largely sold itself to administrators willing to provide resources. Dining halls were willing to provide meals and special rooms to meet in because our dialogue added to the character of the space. In addition, our major advantage from the beginning was that we began as a coalition between two institutions on campus that already had access to funds. As you get further into the process it will be easier to get help from different organizations on campus. You should put some thought in the beginning, however, into where your start up investments will come from.

VI) Building Trust

In order to facilitate the transformation of viewpoints that take place through dialogue, it is important for the chosen moderator of the group to build trust among group members immediately. As the group moves into later stages of the dialogue participants

will need to feel that they can share their viewpoints and experiences in an environment that is safe. Stage one is where the building of this trust must begin.

It is probably best for this to be done in both spoken and written form. We accomplished this by first talking about the importance of confidentiality within the group. Not only did this start to build trust within the group, but it also gave a necessary warning to group members that ensuing conversations were to become very personal. In order to stress fully the importance of confidentiality, group members were required to sign a “Covenant”. (See Appendix 2 for a sample covenant.) This agreement is a written guarantee stating that nothing said within the group will leave the group unless participants agree. With the “Covenant” or some other agreement serving as a starting point, participants will be ready to begin building deeper levels of trust with each other as the dialogue progresses.

Looking Forward

Now that you have agreed to begin the dialogue you may proceed into stage two. You should, however, continue to consider through all stages of the dialogue the problems you faced in the beginning. In particular, commitment to the group and to the process must be maintained in order for it to succeed. Be flexible as you move forward and be willing to adjust some of the decisions you have made during this initial phase. It is important to make sure that the feeling of group ownership you have created in the beginning is preserved. If you are successful, it will only deepen as you move into the next phase of Sustained Dialogue.

Stage Two: Mapping and Naming Problems and Relationships

Once interested people have been assembled and logistical matters have been addressed, the dialogue itself can begin. This is stage two. It is important to remember that the stages do not have concrete boundaries. Individual conversations often have the characteristics of more than one stage, and it is likely that it will be necessary for a group to move back one stage as a result of prematurely advancing.

The overall purpose of stage two is to distill experiences into broad concepts that can be used to move toward the tangible products of the process. At the beginning of this stage, the different members of the group undoubtedly will express dramatically different viewpoints on race and its effects on individuals. By the end of this stage, as a function of openness within the group, each person should be closer to understanding how experiences have shaped each participant. In turn, this new mindset empowers the group to discuss effectively strategies for combating the problem of racism.

In stage two, participants will (1) set the tone and habits of the dialogue, (2) present to the group important problems that will need to be explored, and (3) identify the relationships behind these problems.

This section will delve into and describe:

- How to set the tone.
- The importance of documentation through the process.
- How to begin the discussion.
- Using the power of human experience
- The process of creating a comfort zone.
- Dialogue as power building.

D) Setting the Tone

During the first meeting, it is important to set the tone for the dialogue with some very important judgments and statements.

First, the moderator should make plans for future group meetings. We found that it was effective for the group to have a short discussion about when and where they would like to meet. The moderator should make it clear that the group should meet over a meal about once every two weeks. Although this seems like a small time commitment, it can be very difficult to have a group of ten busy college students and adults commit two dinners a month to the process. As such, in order to reaffirm the group's commitment to the process, the moderator should demonstrate his or her own commitment to Sustained Dialogue. The effectiveness of this message can be augmented by discussion of Sustained Dialogue's success in the past, by stating the group's obligation to take racism into their own hands on their campus, and/or, by the moderator sharing some of his or her own experiences with race in an attempt to illustrate exactly how important the process is to him or her.

In our experience, students were very skeptical to commit time to a process that was yet unproven. Some campus leaders claimed that Sustained Dialogue "just wouldn't work." Invariably, one will encounter such pessimism in potential participants. After all, racism is one of the most longstanding problems in the human experience, meaning that

many do not believe that there are easy solutions. Here it is necessary to realize that Sustained Dialogue is not trying to make everything perfect; instead, the process aims toward one improvement at a time. We confronted skepticism by simply working harder to make Sustained Dialogue work, actively recruiting more participants and holding more events to draw attention to the process. At about the two-year mark of our work, we saw a change in the way people saw Sustained Dialogue. Mainly, given the award Sustained Dialogue won on our campus, and the publicity it had enjoyed in various publications, it became a relatively well-known organization among students. This led to many students approaching us and indicating they were interested in participating. Beyond that, the time we had spent making the process work had afforded us the ability to speak passionately, concisely, and convincingly about the strengths of Sustained Dialogue. In short, given the eloquence of experience and the credibility of public recognition, we now see that potential participants are now much more willing to commit time to the cause.

We found that another tool for ensuring that group members stay committed to Sustained Dialogue was to stop each conversation at an agreed upon time. This deadline was adhered to regardless of where the group stood in conversation. Invariably, people had things they had wanted to say but lacked the time to do so. Thus, excitement about Sustained Dialogue is maintained. It is important for the moderator to force the group get into the habit of doing this at the very first meeting because it also creates a more businesslike atmosphere for the process. Participants that find the time commitment for Sustained Dialogue predictable and reliable will be more willing themselves to make a reliable commitment to it. (See Appendix 4 for a sample meeting agenda.)

Additionally, the moderator should be open to the possibility of having a co-moderator, possibly someone whose leadership presence in the first meeting demonstrates potential to make a very valuable contribution as an official leader of the group. We found that having co-moderators was an important part of the success of Sustained Dialogue because it both lessened the logistical burden on the single moderator and gave the moderators the chance to bounce ideas off of one another in preparation for individual sessions. Furthermore, two co-moderators from different ethnic backgrounds will offer distinct perspectives to the group and provide a greater number of possible avenues for discussion.

Because this process does work toward an end, it is also important for each stage of the process to be carefully documented. Moderators can review notes as the stages progress and look for pervasive themes in order to carefully direct conversation toward the dialogue's goals. After signing the Covenant, a note-taker should be chosen. This appointment is not permanent, as the responsibility of taking the notes should be accompanied by the responsibility of compiling them into readable form and distributing them to the group. In our experience, we found it was best to have a different person take notes at each meeting. Another possibility along these lines would be for the group to compile a logbook. Such a book would contain notes on each week's session and would allow for all records to be centralized. In terms of the notes themselves, it is probably a good idea to record people's names in connection with the statements they make. Given the confidentiality of the dialogue, it is safe to note each person's thoughts. This can help the moderator and the group as a whole in understanding the pervasive themes of the dialogue as they work through the dialogue progress.

II) Beginning the Discussion

At this point, a dialogue on race can truly commence. The moderator can get the conversation started in a number of ways. In our experience, we found it was often most effective to be very direct: “Let’s talk about our experiences with racism.” Silence usually followed such a statement, providing what was sometimes an awkward situation. This, however, is not necessarily something to be afraid of. During such initial periods of silence, participants are often sizing each other up and thinking for the first time about the situation. Do not be afraid, if necessary, to let the group sit until someone speaks up. We found in our initial meetings that courage and a passionate desire to talk about race outshone any shyness.

If silence persists for too long, however, the moderator may wish to take action. In our experience, we found that a very effective means of breaking silences was for the moderator to say something that provokes feeling and/or thought. Of course, something like this can take on many forms. In our experience, it was most effective for the moderator to express a view or anecdote that he or she knew would garner immediate feedback from group members. Your imagination and your experience can synthesize a great number of possible statements. For example, a moderator could bring up a controversial current event that involves race and ask people to share their opinions. Another possibility would be for the moderator to courageously share a serious personal experience that he or she had had with race. Statements such as these, because they frame the discussion around the concrete and human experiences of the people sitting at the table, usually are most effective in making participants speak more freely. Additionally, if group participants witness the moderator taking personal risks, they will be more likely to take risks themselves.

Another means of breaking silence is simply requiring everyone to say something. The moderator can pose a question about race and ask the group to go around the table and answer it. Such an exercise, by nudging people to engage, can break the tension in the meeting’s air and allow the group to move towards a comfort zone. This is probably the most effective and common method we used to promote participation.

In subsequent meetings, the moderator can do a number of things to initiate conversation in this stage. We found that it was very effective to assign participants thought exercises as homework that participants could discuss at the beginning of meetings. It was also useful at times for the moderator to begin a meeting with talk about relevant current events concerning race and race relations. Such an event could range from something that occurred on campus to a national or international event. After discussing individual feelings toward the event, it proved very effective for the group to discuss the relevance of a national or international event to their own campus and their own experiences. Without fail, it will become easier to facilitate discussion after the first few meetings of the group. For one, participants will become comfortable with each other and speak more freely. Beyond that, sustained conversation on racism affords participants an increased sensitivity to incidents of racism in their everyday lives, in turn leading to more sharing of experiences and more fluid conversation.

III) Toward a “Comfort Zone”

When you think about moving the group toward a “comfort zone” do not expect that to mean the dialogue will become “comfortable.” Indeed, truly effective dialogues will be very probing as they help participants to grow by testing the limits of their individual “comfort zones.” The real goal is to generate an atmosphere in which participants are comfortable being honest with each other. Agreeing on a covenant is the first step in doing that. Beyond that, it is most important to pull people in by drawing upon their own experiences

At first, sharing such experiences will be much like “story time”. Still being unfamiliar with each other, participants will be very careful with their responses to other’s experiences. Usually, people at first will venture only a “Hmmm...” or a “Yeah...” or a “Wow...” in response to their colleagues’ stories. After some time, however (perhaps as soon as the end of the first meeting), people will start to *discuss* each other’s experiences. Gradually the dialogue will begin to probe beneath the surface events of a participant’s story. Whereas initial shared experiences centered on events individuals had heard about on campus or in the news, discussion upon reaching a certain “comfort zone”, took on a much more personally substantive character. Participants were no longer afraid to ask personal questions and provide personal insights about the stories that had been shared. In later stages, these individual stories are linked into a larger web of concepts underlying racism.

Creating an environment conducive to the sharing of such experiences is very important, but usually relatively difficult. We have used several different techniques in attempting to create the desired atmosphere. One approach was to organize events in which participants are able to interact outside of the dialogue setting. An example of this was a trip to a pizza parlor located outside of our campus where, while those involved were brought together by Sustained Dialogue, conversation centered on subjects not involving racism. Such a setting allows participants to become more comfortable around each other, thus facilitating more sharing when everyone returns to the dialogue.

Another possible technique for promoting a comfort zone is for the moderator to recognize participants who “seem like they have something to say”, and approach them outside of the dialogue to talk to them more intimately. Often, within the dialogue setting, you will notice participants who make it obvious that they have had experiences pertinent to the discussion but are not comfortable enough in the environment to share them. If you are having trouble imagining this, place yourself in that participant’s position and think about how you would act. Once a person eager to share is identified, it is important for the moderator to make an extra effort to make them feel comfortable in the dialogue group. Usually, this can be accomplished simply through a pleasant one-on-one conversation.

Finally, the creation of a comfortable environment for personal exploration is contingent upon the tone set among the participants. The moderator should lead by example in this aspect, and be sure to address each participant in as respectful and caring a tone as possible. Additionally, he or she should be sure to subtly urge each person to address each other with respect as well. The more openness individual’s statements are met with, the more likely individuals will be to share their most personal experiences.

Once a comfortable environment is created, and participants are able to reach a “comfort zone” for sharing personal experiences, participants can download their experiences until each individual is thinking about race on virtually the same plane.

IV) Using the Power of Human Experience

It is likely that some moments during this downloading phase will be “breath-taking”. As group members become more comfortable with each other, they will share experiences that unconditionally captivate each person in the room. Individuals often allow emotions that have been pent up for years to flow out in the form of a dramatic release of feeling. Such expression is sometimes vitriolic, sometimes didactic, and nearly always cathartic. Moments of emotion like these in our dialogues have been called “magical”, “breath-taking,” and “awe-inspiring”. Invariably, moments like these facilitate dramatic realizations in participants from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Individuals have often admitted that it is humbling to realize exactly how little they knew about human experience.

These are the moments that will draw the participants personally into Sustained Dialogue. Assuming a proper setting, moments like these will happen, and they inspire group bonding and a commitment to think more carefully about and probe more deeply into the issue of race than they had ever before.

At times like these, the dialogue has a mind of its own. The moderator (usually engrossed him or herself) simply sits back as the conversation determines its own path. In its course, it grabs a tight hold of each group member and inspires a sense of hope that will prove very necessary in identifying underlying concepts behind racism and possible solutions to them in later stages of the process.

V) The Dialogue as Power Building

Much of Sustained Dialogue’s success is contingent upon what happens underneath the surface, among the relationships of group members. The moderator has two primary responsibilities: to tend to logistical matters and to direct the conversation toward the dialogue’s desired end. In order to fulfill the latter duty, it is necessary to recognize and analyze the various dynamics among the group members in order to decide how best to direct the conversations. These dynamics will always change as group members become more (or, possibly, less) comfortable sharing with each other.

As the relationships change, so does the power of the group. As people become more comfortable with each other, the group dynamic is more cohesive. Individuals build off of each other’s energy, and the group becomes able to accomplish very exciting things as a whole. Perhaps more importantly, word of the dialogue is bound to find its way back to the organizations that the participants represent giving them greater credibility with which to speak to their constituents about race relations. In addition, Sustained Dialogue serves as an avenue for networking among campus leaders that may not otherwise have the chance to come together around the issue of race.

On our campus, we have observed other very positive effects of the power of cohesive Sustained Dialogue groups. As Sustained Dialogue has grown in size and in credibility, students around campus have gotten word of the program and become more prone to tackle the sensitive issue of race in casual conversation. Beyond that, Sustained Dialogue as an organization has now gained the credibility to make statements about racism on our campus, as will be described later.

Looking Forward

The key to stage two is patience. The moderator should not look to advance to stage three in two meetings. Instead, it is better for the group to dwell on stage two. In past dialogues, stage two has gone on for years. Some group members will be more willing to share experiences than others, but it is important that the group benefits from each person's experiences. Speaking about one's race in relation to one's identity is one of the most difficult things a person can talk about. As a result, the moderator should be sure to give each person (and, therefore, the group) time to get everything off of his or her chest concerning experiences with racism. It is only then that the group can look objectively at the specific problems that lead to racism on their campus. It is important for the moderator to test whether or not the group is ready to move to stage three. To do this, it is important to realize that the primary criterion for readiness at this point is that each participant understands each other participant as much as possible, given the different ranges of experiences.

Stage Three: Probing Problems and Relationships to Choose a Direction

The purpose of stage three is to effectively sharpen the picture of the dynamics of racism on campus and to identify an approach to combat that problem. Once sufficient downloading has occurred in stage two, the character of the dialogue will change. This transition is very difficult as the moderator must be sure that he or she has given enough time for downloading, thus allowing the group to become ready to move to a deeper level. Individuals will begin to speak *with* each other instead of *to* each other. The discussions that previously centered on statements of “What?” now probe deeper into individual experiences to answering the question “Why?” Accordingly, the personality of the dialogue moves from anecdotal to philosophical.

It is important to note that it is almost always necessary to revert to stage two from stage three. Participants must better understand each other’s experiences in order for the group to stand on equal footing while assessing the problem. Once that unity is achieved, the group can begin to pinpoint the specific reasons why their campus’s racial climate has taken its current form.

In stage three, the group will (1) probe more deeply the dynamics of troubled relationships that cause problems, (2) assemble individual experiences into a web of conceptual understanding (3) identify choices for addressing these problems.

This section will explore and describe:

- Creating concepts that pinpoint the problem
- Maintaining a will to change
- Moderator trouble-shooting to keep the dialogue moving along

D) Creating Concepts

In this stage, the group should aim to unify the experiences previously described into named concepts that explain the overall problem. Participants will have already told their personal stories about racism. With the raw material on the table, stage three will begin when the group starts making connections between these stories and attempts to explain the factors at work behind them.

This does not mean that the story telling ends at this stage. Rather, participants begin retelling their own stories and each other’s in order to test connections and build them into concepts. The isolated nodes created by the experiences related in stage two become a web as the group reinterprets them. A phrase that embodies the beginning of this stage is: “In thinking about it, it seems like the way you felt in [story A] is actually quite similar to how I felt in [story B] and this is because of [concept C].” As concepts emerge from the experiences that have been offered, new stories will be added as participants think of other situations that further illustrate the group’s ideas.

Building up to a macro picture, these concepts will explain why racial problems exist. They can range from specific campus events that have shaped students’ viewpoints on race, to general characteristics of the campus’ social climate and dominant features of the American landscape. Regardless, the concepts should be formulated so that participants can say, “If we take steps to overcome *this problem*, race relations on this campus can be significantly improved *along these lines*.”

II) Maintaining a Will to Change

After identifying the concepts that underlie racial tension on campus, the group can choose a general approach to combating race relations as the analysis moves in a specific direction. Pushing the level of detail in concepts continually further, the group can better understand the problems at hand, thus paving the way for the later action-oriented stages. Yet a very important aspect of stage three is that the group generates a will to enact change at the same time that it identifies the concepts that must be addressed. The moderator and the other participants must therefore always have it in the back of their minds that this analysis must serve an ultimate purpose.

Unfortunately, this stage of the discussion can often lead to frustration within the group. Individuals may deem the problems and their obstacles insurmountable and, as a result, begin to lose faith in the process. A common complaint, as participants begin talking but not yet discussing, is that the group is “preaching to the choir,” and therefore not accomplishing anything. Moderators must, therefore, take a more important role in this part of the process, preventing the group from getting off track, preserving high morale and thus helping to generate a desire to enact change.

Stage two can be far more personally fulfilling for group members than stage three. In stage two, individuals have the opportunity to talk about experiences that had major impact on their lives, and that they may never before have had a forum to share. Most likely, they receive feedback that leads to them think differently about race and can leave each meeting with the warm feeling of personal insight and growth.

Once the group enters stage three, the dynamic changes from “me” to “we”. The dialogue no longer serves the same role that drew participants in to begin with, and thus individuals may not receive as much personal satisfaction from the process. As the work becomes more difficult, participants may begin to lose interest in the process and the group may “get stuck.” Yet without continued commitment from each member, the group’s dynamic and, hence, its goals will likely suffer.

Accordingly, it is the moderator’s responsibility to keep participants from avoiding the difficult analysis that furthers the dialogue. Of course, not everyone will avoid delving deeper, but the moderator should be prepared for it nonetheless. Expect that some members of the group will resist placing their own experiences into context with the other stories told by participants and that it will be hard for some to express how they felt or what they were thinking in a given situation. For some, there may be a tendency to claim that their stories speak for themselves and therefore require no looking into. Others may simply dwell on continual narration of additional stories rather than seriously addressing what is already on the table.

Yet these are the places that the moderator should focus on, because they often conceal the deepest insights. If participants show resistance to analyzing experiences, it could mean that they are grappling with underlying feelings they would rather not admit. As participants reach stage three, they relate their personal feelings to larger forces. For some, this means admitting feelings of absolute frustration and disempowerment. For others, stage three is a time when they come to terms with their own racism and roles in perpetuating an unfair system. It is necessary to remember that each individual has become involved in Sustained Dialogue for her or his own personal reasons. Some

individual's may simply have wanted to find an audience to listen to his or her experiences, while others became involved in the process with the distinct hope of changing the racial climate of their community.

Seeing that these different desires are fulfilled by different stages of the dialogue, it is the moderator's responsibility to help ensure that the group's interest in the proceedings evolves as the purpose of the discussion changes. An effective method of keeping abstract discussions on the personal level is always to relate the abstract concepts on the table to experiences that have already been described.

The moderator can lead the way by being the first to offer new ways to think about past experiences and to relate them through broader ideas. Challenge participants to analyze how a particular concept may have been working underneath an experience that was painful for them. Taking it from the other side, ask participants to tell new stories from their lives that can add new illustrations of concepts at work. Increase empathy within the group by helping participants to see how their different experiences with racism placed them each in the same position.

A key aspect of unity and trust that should hopefully have developed by now is that the members of the group "piggyback" off of each other's ideas. The group dynamic by this point should have progressed to a point where individuals feed off of one another's energy. There is the definite appearance of people who have grown together and are now working together toward a common purpose. If you find that such a dynamic is not present, and the conversation seems to be stuck, it is necessary to investigate possible means to get the conversation moving again.

III) Trouble-shooting Hints

In order to do this, you can use some of the techniques discussed in stage two. You can try making "statements that provoke feeling and thought" or you can ask each person to speak on a certain topic in turn. However, as was also mentioned in stage two, the moderator's duties go beyond simply moving the course of the conversation. You should move toward pinpointing exactly *why* the group is stuck. As discussed above, identifying the reasons that people are hesitant or slow in moving forward in this stage can speak volumes about underlying issues.

If the dialogue appears to have lost direction, another strategy would be to take a step back, asking the group what each person hopes to get out of the process. When the character of the conversation changes, participants may need to rethink their interest in the process in order to continue attending. Placing this topic on the table can serve as an inspiration those that may have lost enthusiasm and can help everyone to settle for him or herself why the later stages of the dialogue are necessary. In doing this, the tone for the rest of the dialogue is set.

Yet if pointed questions and pep talks are insufficient for keeping the group on track, the moderator should also consider whether the voices represented at the table reflect a diverse enough set of viewpoints to make the conversation meaningful. Though an important aspect of this entire process is building group dynamics, adding new and particularly vocal participants can often jumpstart dialogues that have gotten bogged down. If the group appears unresponsive to the suggestions made above, adding

individuals with fresh enthusiasm and new perspectives may reinvigorate everyone else as they are forced to think about problems in new ways and address new questions.

Looking Forward

In this stage, the group begins to discuss race from a more philosophical or analytical standpoint in order to diagnose the causes of racial conflict on their campus. In effect, the group builds its experiences into concepts. The moderator should be careful that the group does not get ahead of itself and attempt to create solutions at this stage. It is important that a complete list of concepts be generated. Following this, the group should identify the specific direction in which they want to move to combat the problem. Ideally, after getting to this point, the group shares a will to change that will be pivotal to their progress in later stages.

Stage Four: Scenario Building

By the time you and your group begins the fourth stage of Sustained Dialogue you will have spent almost all of your meetings talking about problems. The dialogue group's relationship will have dramatically changed in the process as participants have learned to view the problems discussed from each other's perspective. This is the stage at which the group needs to start thinking constructively about positive steps they can take. The understanding of complex problems needs to transfer into the power to address them.

Moderators should know, however, that like stage three, stage four is not something that the group can be pushed into. Rather, it is one that the group will find itself in when it is finished analyzing a problem in stage three and ready to solve it. In our own experience, we found our groups floating between stage four and the other stages throughout the course of meetings. You should know that when your group reaches the stage in which it is ready to begin formulating solutions it will have developed the kind of bond and awareness that discussions will have a life of their own. Because the problems your group will be discussing by now will be particularly distinct, this section will not attempt to act as a roadmap. Rather it will attempt to show through experience a path that your group may take as it moves from a state of analysis to creation.

In stage four participants will attempt to (1) list obstacles to change, (2) develop actions and strategies for overcoming these obstacles, and (3) identify the individuals and groups that can take the necessary steps.

This section will describe:

- The change to thinking positively about problems.
- The process of designing exercises to evaluate problems.
- The importance of and challenges to maintaining commitment through this stage.

D) Thinking Positively

At this point the group will have spent so much time talking about the challenges the community faces that participants may be feeling a sense of hopelessness. A major change that takes place in this stage is that participants will turn from the problems that the community is facing and begin to talk about what will work. When you sense that the group is ready to start talking about solutions, you may need to help facilitate this change. Try making the group think about actions and strategies that have been effective in the past. This is a lot harder than it sounds. People have a natural tendency to take past successes for granted and to gloss over what about them made them work. Generating a list of even the simplest set of actions and strategies that have an impact will provide you with valuable tools for deciding upon future steps.

In the case of our own experience, the transition happened when one of the participants simply got fed up with talking negatively about the problems and said "Alright guys! What actually works?" The conversation that followed was one in which fellow participants, peers and friends listed effective solutions that already existed on

campus and then distilled from those solutions what made them effective. The group was thus left with a list of ways to solve problems.

You should also know that thinking positively about the problems does not just serve the purpose of bringing forth new strategies. A less obvious benefit of taking this asset-based approach is that it can serve to rebuild the group's confidence. Seeing that there already are options for the group to follow will help reinvigorate faith that the group can make a difference.

II) Developing Exercises

Another way in which groups can move forward in developing scenarios is through the application of thought exercises that allow participants to address elements of particular problems. We found it particularly useful at times to apply information that we gathered in order to solve hypothetical problems. The relevant questions to be asking here are "What does one do in this situation?" or "How can we reach someone in that position?" Role-playing may a useful tool as you begin to formulate scenarios. You may also think about developing simulated problems and asking participants to solve them.

To give a sense of the options open to you at this stage, we will provide a description of one exercise we found quite effective and systematic. During one of our meetings, the group was attempting to brainstorm strategies for reaching different kinds of students within the campus community. We were struggling with the problem that some students contribute to the overall problem because of ignorance of the problem, while others do so because of a lack of tolerance, while still others contribute because of a combination of both.

The various permutations of such a discussion were mind-boggling and the group was beginning to get frustrated. Then, out of nowhere, one group participant suggested plotting it all on a four-quadrant graph. By making one axis level of awareness and the other level of tolerance of racial diversity we could pinpoint different types of personalities by degree and then decide which of the kinds of approaches we had distilled during our discussion of "things that worked" might be applicable to them.

The modeling that we did through this exercise was somewhat clumsy and it involved using some gross generalizations about campus personalities. This made it still difficult for some participants to get into it. The major objection was that the problem of racism simply defied satisfactory reduction to a working model and the group should, therefore, not try. Gradually, however, we were able to work out most of the frustrations with the framework we were using so that everyone was willing to continue. In this case, it simply took some real patience on the part of the moderators and a few participants to push the group to accept the limitations of modeling. Once we got into it, we found the simplification of the exercise very powerful in matching tools we had described to situations and personality types with whom they would be effective.

Regardless of whether you or your group chooses to use such overt methods of scenario building, the basic question you should be asking at this point is "what if?". At this stage you are testing out possible solutions in the controlled environment of the dialogue room. Do not be afraid to discuss the most radical or obscure scenarios. Innovation can come from the strangest places and the creativity of this process comes from participants' ability to build off of and adapt each other's ideas. It is impossible to

predict how conversations will proceed so just try to make sure that the group is staying on task.

III) Maintaining Commitment

As you work through stage four you need to be extremely sensitive to the level of commitment on the part of the group. A problem you will have already encountered in stage three is that the function of the dialogue will have changed fundamentally from what it served in stage two. Rather than venting its past experiences, the dialogue group will now be straining itself intellectually to develop solutions. This means that the aspects of Sustained Dialogue that will have earned many people's commitment in the beginning will have disappeared. Do not be surprised if you find that some of the participants took part in Sustained Dialogue primarily for its therapeutic function rather than to solve campus problems.

You may also face resistance at this stage because the task has become much more difficult and complex. Confronting the issues on the table can be extremely daunting and even imagining solutions may be frightening. In addition, the group may become frustrated as you discuss possible actions because no solution seems adequate.

As you move through stage four you should, therefore, remember that patience, as always, is the key. First, resistance on the part of some participants to discussing solutions may come from the fact they have not fully worked through earlier stages. You should, therefore, always be ready to go back and explore other problems.

At the same time, you should be wary of the group's level of frustration. After exploring challenges for a number of weeks the group may feel itself facing obstacles that are impossible to surmount. In order to keep the group committed to the process this may be a good time to begin thinking positive. Also, as you dive into making scenarios you should remind participants that if perfect solutions did exist to these problems, there would be no problems. The task of the group is to accept the obstacles and think about what actions will serve to improve the situation rather than make it perfect.

Looking Forward

You will know you have completed stage four when you have selected actions that can be taken and identified people or groups that can take these actions. Commitment will be crucial as you move into the final stage of Sustained Dialogue. Many participants may feel that they have gotten what they want out of the process. Others still may feel that the costs of taking the actions described are too great to make them worthwhile. Stage five will only truly begin when members of the group become tired of talking and decide to act.

Stage Five: Acting Together

Through the course of the last four stages we have emphasized the importance of patience with the process. To a large extent, the moderator is powerless in controlling the pace of the group's progression and only at the proper time can a group move through the stages. This, of course, takes time and as you think about moving into the final stages of Sustained Dialogue, a major logistical concern you will be having is whether there will be enough time in the school year to complete the process. We suggest that you do not feel obligated to get through the process in a given time limit. Having tried at times to push our groups faster than they were prepared to go, we can tell you that it creates more trouble than it is worth.

It is, therefore, important that you not rush into the acting stage of Sustained Dialogue. If you need to, close the year with the agreement that the dialogue will continue the next year. What is most important is that any action your group takes is its own. They should be actions that come from the analysis that the dialogue has fostered. Avoid the pitfall of taking action simply for the sake of taking action.

Because the decision to act and the choice of actions must come from the participants, this section is not meant to provide suggestions for actions. Rather, it is intended to offer a few considerations to take with you as you decide to act.

In stage five, participants will (1) decide whether the situation within their community is such that scenarios developed in stage four are workable, (2) determine what resources and capacities can be used to realize them, and (3) act.

This section will discuss:

- The significance of the four-year cycle.
- Possibilities for outreach.
- The diversity of forms of action that comes out of the dialogue process.
- The value of spreading opportunities to engage in dialogue.

D) The Four Year Cycle Revisited

As we described in the introduction to this handbook, you have an advantage in working to change campus culture over other environments because a college student body has a life cycle of only four years. This fact creates a naturally truncated institutional memory and a rapid process of acculturation. Experiences that a class may have as freshmen can cause a change in campus culture by the time they are juniors or seniors.

This means that actions you take now can improve the overall campus climate in a fairly short period of time. Memory of incidents, social structures and traditions that were anemic to race relations can more easily fade away and new traditions can be more readily established. The mutability of campus culture as compared to culture in other places is one of your greatest assets as you choose to act. The ways in which you impact the way freshmen perceive campus culture this year will in turn impact the way the entire student body perceives it as that class rises to leadership within the school. It also means that race relations can deteriorate just as quickly, but that should be viewed as a reason for action rather than an obstacle to it.

II) Possibilities for Outreach

During the process, the group has grown together. Inter-personal relationships within the group are dramatically different in character and in intensity from how they were in the beginning. This dynamic is not something that can be predicted and, thus, the group's course at this point will be entirely a function of the specific ideas that have carried them together through the process.

While each group's path and action will be different, we can advise a few possibilities for action. In order to change the racial climate of a community, outreach is necessary. To that end, groups in stage five will most likely be looking for a way to share their experiences with those within their community whose experiences with race (or lack thereof) have rendered them either intolerant or ignorant of the issue of race.

Naturally, this can be done in a number of different ways. For one, the group as a whole can reach out to people. A very effective program that we conducted was showing the movie "The Color of Fear" in a small theater on campus. "The Color of Fear" is a very provocative movie that can have dramatic effects on the racial majority's opinion of the issue of race. Each dialogue participant was required to bring three friends who normally would not think about race. Following the movie, two group moderators led a discussion among everyone in the room. The people that took part in this event were obviously moved by it, and took different opinions of race back to their dorms to be shared with others. A number of group outreach activities such as this one can be imagined. Another possibility for outreach is for each person to reach out individually. Individuals can make concerted efforts to start discussions about race with many different people. However, not all action needs to center around people in the dialogue group. Instead, the group can often look to enlist the services of other student groups on campus to carry out projects that move toward awareness, tolerance, and, in turn, change.

Race relations on college campuses, in our experience, are something that the majority looks at as a non-issue and that minorities look at as an immutable unpleasant aspect of a college campus. As such, it is usually necessary to do two things in order to make an initial action effective: build awareness and build hope.

III) Diverse forms of Action

As the group actually begins steps to take action, remember that the most effective actions address the problems at hand in their own terms and not through any particular formula for action. This is important to recognize because the most effective actions coming out of Sustained Dialogue may not necessarily take place as an official action of the dialogue group.

To give an example, on our campus, Sustained Dialogue led a participant to produce a report for administrators asking for specific steps to improve life for minorities on campus. Additionally, it was the inspiration for two dialogue members from the class of 2001 to have their class honor Judge Bruce Wright, an African American that had been admitted to Princeton in the 1930's but who, upon arriving to matriculate, was immediately sent home when the administration discovered he was black. The dialogues also led the President of the student government to initiate standing committees to report to the administration on the state of women and minorities on campus.

All this is listed to show that the actions coming out of Sustained Dialogue are often taken by individual participants that recognize the process as their reason for acting, but do so because they see themselves in the most effective position to initiate change. As the moderator, it is important to know that this is the form that action will often take, because you need to be flexible enough to allow and encourage such individual steps to take place. Indeed, at the outset of our process, we imagined quite one dimensionally that the actions coming out of our dialogue would be enacted by the groups as a whole working as one body. This conception, however, did not recognize that our greatest assets for taking action were the positioning and influence of the campus leaders that engaged in Sustained Dialogue. It was when these students took conceptual understanding of problems, plans of action, and conviction that they had gained from the dialogues back to their public positions that the action stage really began.

As such, it is important to remember the nature of expected action when beginning in Stage One. Ultimately, the action stage of Sustained Dialogue will be greatly facilitated if you can begin the process with current or rising campus leaders sitting at the table. This, of course, goes back to the idea of the dialogue as a process of power building. Dialogue places leaders in contact that may never have had contact before. From this contact, partnerships form for improving racial problems that can lead entire organizations to work together the first time. In addition, leaders hoping to take action within their own circles or organizations can use their participation in the process as a source of credibility, lending greater authority to the steps they want to take.

Sustained Dialogue can also initiate change through action-committees, devoted to taking immediate material steps to improve the situation. Such groups may include different participants from actual dialogue groups, but are aided by the ideas and strategies coming out of Sustained Dialogue. In our own case, this took place in the spring of 2001 when a separate group of concerned students began their own “Action Oriented Race Dialogues,” partially in reaction to the more deliberative nature of Sustained Dialogue. The goal was to tackle aspects of race relations at weekly public meetings, attempting to brainstorm at every meeting about steps that they could take to improve the situation.

From the beginning, Sustained Dialogue participants took part in these other discussions, and we found the groups’ roles to be actually quite complimentary. The “Action Oriented” talks marshaled popular enthusiasm to initiate change, but lacked the perspective on deeper systemic and social issues that was necessary to formulate deeper and more innovative actions. In contrast, Sustained Dialogue’s probing of concepts generated a large quantity of ideas, but the groups’ willingness to deliberate slowly on these issues meant that they also did not have the activist energy present in the other talks. Thus, with overlapping membership and recruiting, participants in both efforts could lend each other ideas and power to act.

You must also be aware by now that in a smaller community like a college campus, the process in and of itself is a powerful action. Your dialogue will impact its participants. In doing so, those people from different subgroups on campus will transfer their accumulated knowledge to others. Remember this as you evaluate the success of the process in your own mind. In addition, the value of the dialogue for the people engaging in it makes it a more than worthwhile endeavor.

This is meant to serve as a reminder and not as a substitute for the other ways of taking action discussed above. It should, however, be reason for confidence and patience. If you are engaging in dialogue, you are positively impacting race relations on your campus. Be proud of that and think about how your experiences can benefit others.

IV) Proliferation

Seeing that the process itself is an action, a goal of Sustained Dialogue should be to expand it to as many people in the community as possible. As mentioned above, each time a person is moved by a conversation and each time a new, more understanding viewpoint is engrained in someone, race relations within a community have been improved. Such is the case with the formation of each new dialogue group.

Two years ago, two pilot dialogue groups were started on our campus. Almost everyone involved in these groups was moved by increased understanding toward action. With each person involved in these groups now fluent in the process of Sustained Dialogue, our efforts were expanded to four full dialogue groups. Hopefully, the program will expand further in coming years. Experienced individuals from these groups can spread the word of Sustained Dialogue to underclassmen and upperclassmen alike. Dialogue groups will continue to proliferate long after we have left Princeton, and this hope assures us that the process is productive, regardless of what action manifests itself out of stage five.

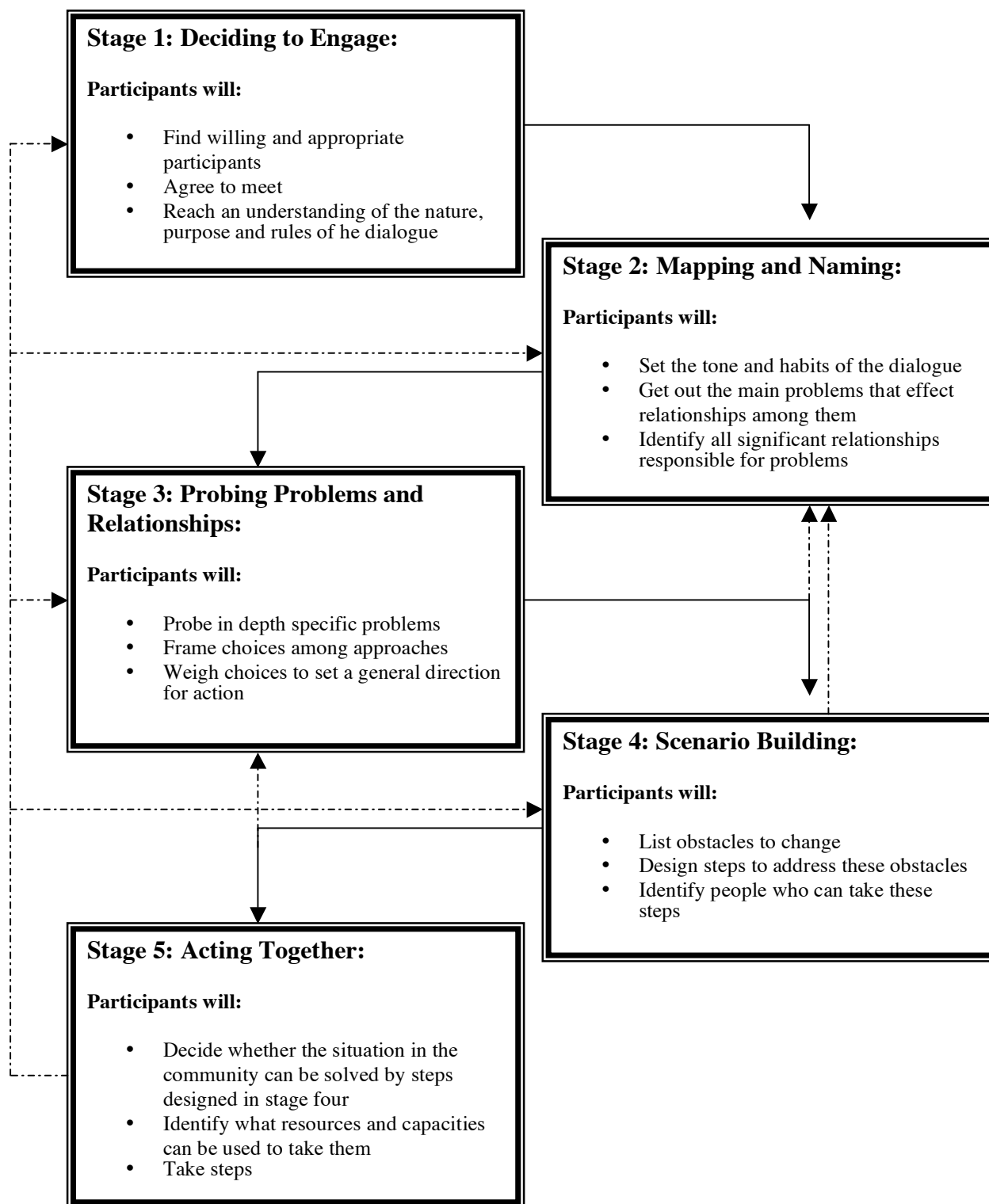
While word of mouth is integral to the success of Sustained Dialogue, group members should also use other means to further the community's knowledge of the process and its fruits. We have benefited from publicity from bodies such as the school newspaper and by having our efforts mentioned by members of the campus in various contexts. Also, as mentioned earlier, Sustained Dialogue was awarded the Daily Princetonian award for distinguished service, an honor that furthers the awareness and credibility integral to Sustained Dialogue's success. In order to gain such positive publicity, it was important to have each person involved in the group be able to articulate exactly what Sustained Dialogue is and exactly how promising the process can be. Such optimistic words about race relations are received well by practically everyone in the campus community and, as such, can be counted upon to spread.

V) Conclusion

The methodology we have outlined and the tips we have given serve as our own interpretation of the success of Sustained Dialogue on our campus. It is only a model, however, with some concrete examples provided to better illustrate the different aspects of the process. You shall tailor Sustained Dialogue to fit the needs of your own community. Though it would be beautiful to see Sustained Dialogue pass from stage one to stage five in practically the same fashion in which it has been outlined above you should always remember that the experience your group will have and the insights participants will learn from each other will be distinct. When you have downloaded, pinpointed the problems and their obstacles and formulated solutions, you will realize that you have learned more about human relationships than you could have in any

classroom. At that point, you too can sit down as we have and try your hardest to share this amazing process with other people who can benefit from it.

Appendix 1
Flow Chart of Sustained Dialogue Phases



Appendix 2 **Covenant**

- The purpose of this dialogue is to work on changing the relationships among the groups with which participants identify.
- There will always be two items in the agenda: the particular problems participants need to talk about and the underlying feelings and relationships that cause these problems.
- Because of the importance of this work, participants commit themselves to meet approximately twice per month, at least two hours per meeting. The duration of the series will be open-ended. Participants will wait until they are well into the dialogue to agree on when to finish the series of meetings.
- Participants represent only themselves. They reflect views in their communities, but, in these dialogue sessions, they do not formally represent organizations or groups.
- Participants will observe time limits on their statements to allow genuine dialogue.
- Participants will speak from their hearts as well as from their minds.
- Participants will interact civilly, listen actively to each other with attention and respect, not interrupt and allow each to present her or his views fully.
- Because participants will need to speak about the feelings and relationships behind the specific problems that bother them, feelings will be expressed and heard with mutual respect. Participants will try to learn from these expressions.
- Participants will try to respond as directly and as fully as possible to points made and questions asked. Each will make a real effort to put herself or himself in others' shoes and speak with sensitivity for others' views and feelings.
- To facilitate serious work, participants will listen carefully to the issues and questions posed by the moderator and try to stick to them.
- Nobody in the dialogue will be quoted outside the meeting room.
- No one will speak publicly about the substantive discussion in the dialogue unless all agree.

From A Public Peace Process by Harold Saunders

Appendix 3
Sample Retreat Agenda

1. **Morning Refreshments**
2. **Icebreaker**
V) A brief activity allowing people to become more comfortable with each other
3. **Student Panel**
VI) Students speak in front of the retreat, talking how race has affected them, indicating the need for a program like sustained dialogue on campus
4. **Speaker on Sustained Dialogue**
VII) Ideally someone from outside the community with experience with sustained dialogue to introduce the process
VIII) Speaker should address both the theoretical aspects of sustained dialogue and its past applications to communities
5. **Lunch**
6. **Division of Groups, beginning of dialogue**
IX) Retreat participants should be divided somewhat randomly into their dialogue groups for the year

Appendix 4
Sample Meeting Agenda

- 1) **Meeting Convenes** (Participants have already agreed on a set time and place for the meeting)

- 2) **Pre-Discussion Business:**
 - Schedule next meeting time and place
 - Agree on a time to end discussion
 - Choose person to take notes and forward to group
 - Participants make any announcements that are relevant

- 3) **Discussion:**
 - Conversation generally begins with a discussion of the previous homework assignment
 - Participants explore topics of interest from previous meetings or new ones

- 4) **Ending the Meeting**
 - Discussion ends when the agreed upon time is reached
 - Participants agree upon a “homework” assignment for the next meeting

Appendix 5

The Concept of Relationship

Social and political life is a multi-level process of continuous interaction among significant elements of whole bodies politic across permeable borders. We use the human word *relationship* to capture that dynamic process of continuous interaction. The concept of relationship is both a diagnostic and an operational tool—diagnostic as it helps form a picture of a relationship from unfolding and confusing exchanges in dialogue; operational as it helps us get inside an interaction to change a relationship.

Relationships combine five elements. The overall mix—their continuously changing interactions—characterizes a relationship. Changes in any element and changes in the combination of elements explain why a relationship changes. Each is a point of entry in efforts to change conflictual relationships.

Identity. Each party in a relationship is described most simply in terms of physical characteristics—a group’s size, ethnicity, demographic composition, resources.... But it is also essential to understand what human experiences have shaped a person’s or a group’s mindset and ways of acting in relationships with others. We often define ourselves in terms of who we are—parents, enemies...

Interests. We have commonly defined interests in material terms—how much money or property we need, what positions we want to control.... But interests are defined in human terms as well. Our need for acceptance, inner security, dignity...

Power is defined normally in physical terms—greater economic resources, military force, institutions controlled—and as one’s ability to force another to do what it does not want to do—power “over.” But citizens without those raw forms of physical power have come together to change the course of events—the sit ins and marches of the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, Wenceslas Square, Solidarity, the “vote no” campaign against Pinochet. Citizens generated power by acting together.

Perceptions, misperceptions, stereotypes familiar to us all often define relationships. Because you have black or white skin, you are likely to act in a predictable way.

Patterns of interaction—confrontational, collaborative, combative, argumentative, problem-solving—become characteristic of any relationship. As we understand identity and interests, we may limit interactions to respect them.

Once we analyze interactions between or among groups using such headings, we can actually change interactions through dialogue. Identities don’t change, but respect for another’s identity can become real—no longer mindless hatred fueling deep-rooted conflict. Realization of others’ interests can reveal shared interests. People can see how they need each other to fulfill their own interests. Power over can become power with. Stereotypes fade as people sit together. People stop talking at each other and begin talking with each other to solve a problem and actually work together.