

Mission Statement

The Sustained Dialogue Campus Network's mission is to train, mentor, and connect student leaders who initiate and sustain dialogues to build cohesive, engaged, and diverse campus communities across the country.

Does tension separate racial, ethnic, religious, or other peer groups on your campus? Are you concerned with inter-group conflict at your school? Are you looking to change your school's social climate and to improve strained student relationships?

In 1999, students began using a unique process called Sustained Dialogue (SD) to proactively improve race relations on college campuses. A network of Sustained Dialogue practitioners has since formed, connecting students at over a dozen colleges, universities, and high schools. This network, called the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network (SDCN), represents a budding social movement of passionate students, deeply engaged in changing the dynamics of their communities.

SDCN supports groups of students engaged in initiating, moderating, and institutionalizing Sustained Dialogue, an organic five-stage process that addresses strained relationships to improve communities.



How does SD Change Communities?

Sustained Dialogue creates a safe space to address divisive issues, like race relations, that are often taboo in social settings. In this space, participants learn from one another and are changed by the experiences they share so that they can begin to truly understand the problems that face their communities and what power they have, as a group of individuals, to address them.



Sustained Dialogue proceeds naturally through five stages:

- 1 Deciding to engage
- 2 Story Telling: Mapping and naming the problem
- 3 Probing problems and relationships, in order to determine a direction
- 4 Identifying possible approaches to problem
- 5 Acting together

How does this work?

- * Students come together for 2-hour dialogue meetings, twice a month
- * Each SD group consists of 8-12 participants, reflective of the community diversity
- * 2 students, trained by SDCN, moderate each dialogue meeting
- * Dialogues focus on probing a particular subject that divides the community (for example, race relations)

What impact can Sustained Dialogue have on your campus?

- * SD broadens individual perspectives
- * SD helps students build relationships across community divides
- * SD equips students with communication skills and a higher level of cultural fluency necessary in an increasingly diverse society
- * SD empowers students with tools to make change happen in their communities and enables them to take ownership of the challenging task of improving strained relationships.

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How can SDCN help your school initiate an SD program?

Since 2002, SDCN has been assisting concerned students, faculty, and school administrators who want to initiate SD on their campuses. SDCN's services include:

- * SD literature, available upon request, which introduces our unique, community-building process
- * 1-day Initiator Training for students interested in starting SD in their campus communities
- * 2-day Moderators Training for student leaders
- * Support network and resources, as students work to build and maintain their SD programs
- * SDCN's National Intercollegiate Conference, which brings SD student practitioners and alumni together annually for a weekend of workshops, dialogue sessions, and activities that build and strengthen the network and each individual campus program

"Sustained Dialogue offered me as a student a concrete way to transform my own community. It empowers and challenges students to take on their own problems and become engaged agents of change."

- Priya Parker, UVA Program Founder,
SDCN Program Director '04-'05