



# BUILDING NEXT-GEN LEADERS

*Empowering Students to Navigate a Divided World*

**A National Conference in San Diego, CA  
October 19-20, 2025**

*In partnership with:*



**LEADCALIFORNIA**

**SUNDAY // OCTOBER 19 // 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM**

## **WELCOME COCKTAIL HOUR**

### SETTING THE STAGE

**Dr. Timothy J. Shaffer**, *Dr. Timothy J. Shaffer, SNF Ithaca Initiative Director, Biden School at University of Delaware*

A networking reception designed to spark early connections among participants, speakers, and university partners. The evening will lay the groundwork for deeper collaboration, trust-building, and shared momentum to move these initiatives forward.

**MONDAY // OCTOBER 20 // 8:00 AM to 4:35 PM - FULL DAY CONFERENCE**

## **BREAKFAST & NETWORKING**

### OPENING WELCOME REMARKS

**Dr. Elizabeth H. Simmons**, *Executive Vice Chancellor, UC San Diego*

**Steven P. Dinkin**, *President, National Conflict Resolution Center*

### FRAMING THE DAY + Q&A (Keynote Address)

**Jennifer L. Mnookin**, *Chancellor, University of Wisconsin*

### PRESENTATION OF IMPACT PAPER + PANEL Q&A

The University of California San Diego, Center for Research & Evaluation will present the results of their impact paper. Based on 70+ interviews with campus leaders, faculty, and staff, and accompanied by a survey of 125 students, the impact paper serves as a toolkit of best practices for college campuses looking to implement or transform civil discourse programs on their campuses. The authors will discuss why teaching dialogue skills is a core part of the higher education mission and critical for students as they embark on careers and take up leadership roles in their local communities and beyond. They will detail the strategic decisions higher education leaders, faculty, staff, and students may consider making based on their local contexts, including what type of program to develop, whether and how to utilize third-party organizations, and what skills to teach. Finally, they will discuss anticipated challenges and strategies for overcoming obstacles.

### MINI-PRESENTATION (UCLA MAPPING)

This mini presentation will highlight recent efforts at UCLA to create an online repository of civil discourse initiatives (e.g., courses, events, programs) taking place across campus. Even when campuses have discrete civil discourse programs, there can oftentimes be initiatives under the auspices of civil discourse that may not be explicitly aligned with formal programs. Maia Ferdman will share insights from putting together this repository and suggestions for how to do similar work on other campuses.

## **PANEL 1:** **CAMPUS MODELS FOR NEXT-GEN LEADERSHIP IN A DIVIDED AGE**

Civil discourse programs on college campuses take many shapes and forms. This session will focus on four types: cohort programs, course-based models, micro-credentials, and whole campus approaches. As there is no one-size-fits-all approach to creating a civil discourse program, the panelists will discuss their rationale for their programmatic approaches, how it works in their university or college context, creating campus partnerships, the importance of relationships with college and university leaders, and how different types of programs translate to skills learned.

### ***Featuring representatives from:***

- **UCLA**
- **Seattle University**
- **Colorado State University**
- **Shepherd University**
- **University of Chicago**

## **LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK**

## **PANEL 2:** **CAMPUS TO COMMUNITY – THIRD-PARTY ORGANIZATIONS**

Third-party organizations often assist campuses with their civil discourse efforts. These partnerships offer a wide range of benefits – from ready-made resources and professional facilitation training to institutional capacity-building and cultural transformation. As campuses explore how to incorporate dialogue programming into their contexts, external organizations not only provide content expertise, but also infrastructure, legitimacy, and ongoing support. This session will feature representatives from third-party organizations who will discuss their unique approaches, how they connect and partner with campuses, and the benefits of engaging an external partner in civil discourse programming.

### ***Featuring leaders from:***

- **BridgeUSA**
- **Sustained Dialogue Institute**
- **Constructive Dialogue Institute**
- **Ohio Wesleyan University**
- **Narrative 4**

## **PANEL 3:** **COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL APPROACHES**

There is a growing trend of collaborative regional approaches towards civil discourse programming. While colleges and universities generally have programs that are specific to their campus, there are myriad benefits to partnering with individuals and programs at other campuses. These include the ability to cross-promote efforts, include a more diverse student body, cover a wider range of issues, and expose students to issues in their broader communities. This session will highlight the success of this approach from the perspective of colleges and universities in North Carolina that have championed these efforts.

### ***Featuring representatives from:***

- **University of San Diego (USD)**
- **North Carolina Campus Engagement**
- **University of North Carolina (UNC)**
- **Davidson College**
- **North Carolina A&T (NCAT)**

## WORKSHOPS // PARTICIPANTS BREAKOUTS

### NARRATIVE 4 STORY EXCHANGE

This session explores how a university partnership with Narrative 4, a global organization that uses the power of story to build a culture of inclusivity and connectedness, has strengthened student capacity for dialogue both in and beyond the classroom. Grounded in theory and praxis, the session navigates how the curricular and cocurricular integration of Narrative 4's facilitator led story exchange methodology fosters the intellectual humility and intercultural maturity necessary to cultivate empathy and connection among students.

### MEASURING AND COMMUNICATING IMPACT

This session will focus on how the Civil Discourse Lab (CDL) at the University of New Hampshire measures the impact of its programming on students. Since 2017, the CDL has enrolled 239 active volunteer undergraduate students who completed more than 2,000 hours of civil discourse training and facilitations. Dr. Renee Heath will reflect on how they selected outcome variables, how they quantify success, and offer insights for programs seeking to incorporate evaluation techniques into their programming.

### STUDENT-LED FACILITATION IN PRACTICE

In this breakout, Colorado State University Center for Public Deliberation (CPD) Director Martin Carcasson will provide an overview of the CPD's wicked problems framework, and then students from the program will facilitate a values exercise as an example of a facilitated small group process. The exercise is part of the CPD training as well as an event they ran in the community multiple times to reduce polarization and build capacity for participants to engage across differences more productively.

### STUDENT-LED CONVERSATIONS ON AI: EMPOWERING CAMPUS VOICES FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP

This session spotlights how student-led conversations, supported by AI-powered listening tools, can amplify college and university voices as catalysts for civic leadership. Drawing on Cortico's campus initiatives, we will explore how authentic dialogue surfaces insights, builds empathy across differences, and drives action on campus and in the broader community. Participants will gain practical strategies to design and facilitate student-centered conversations that build civic readiness and strengthen leadership capacity. The session closes with a call to action to empower students to lead ongoing, meaningful conversations about AI and its impact on their futures.

### DIALOGUE IN DIVISIVE TIMES

This interactive session, led by the National Conflict Resolution Center, equips students, faculty, and staff with tools to navigate today's most challenging conversations. Participants will explore practical strategies for discussing divisive topics respectfully, managing personal biases, and fostering mutual understanding across differences. Through guided activities, the session emphasizes conversational receptiveness, inclusive communication, and active listening—skills essential for building empathy and leadership capacity on campus and beyond.

### LARGE-GROUP WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

### CLOSING REMARKS

*Sponsored by:*

**Elaine Galinson and Herb Solomon**



**REGISTER TO ATTEND!**

**Click Here or Scan the QR code**

Travel stipend available for eligible registrants.

**Applied Research  
Center for Civility**

UC San Diego

