

Husker Dialogues: An Event for First Year UNL Students

What is Husker Dialogues?

Husker Dialogues is a campus event for first year students that will sponsor conversation about how to promote respect and understanding for different perspectives and identities in the Husker community. It is designed to introduce first-year students to tools they can use to engage in meaningful conversations about inclusion and diversity.

The event will kick off with a brief presentation by Chancellor Green followed by students engaging in small group conversations (10-12 students) facilitated by faculty, staff and student guides. Conversation guides will use four to five questions drawn from the “Dine, Dialogue, and Pass It On card deck” that was developed three years ago by faculty and staff to sponsor conversations about identity, inclusion, and diversity. <http://stuafs.unl.edu/dine-dialogue-and-pass-it>

The role of the guides is to encourage students to reflect upon and share their responses to the questions. Following the conversation, students will be asked to briefly reflect in writing on the value of the experience on index cards that will be collected. They will also receive a four-question survey to be answered on their phones.

When and where will it be held?

Tuesday, September 13 from 5:30-6:45 and 7:30-8:45 (students can choose one of the two sessions) at the Lied Center. Students will be encouraged to arrive 10-15 minutes early. During that time, a slide show will feature tips for engaging in respectful dialogue and historical notes about the diversity of the Husker community and its contributions to excellence.

Who is organizing it?

Husker Dialogues is being developed and run through a joint collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Steering Committee members include representatives of faculty, staff, and students. (see full list at end of this document).

How will first year students learn about it?

Chancellor Green will introduce the event in his remarks at this year’s First Year Student Convocation (August 19th). Omaid Zabith, a former student who was critical to passing the student fee for the Gaughan Multicultural Center will also be speaking at that event. In addition, a flier will be sent to instructors of first year classes, requesting that they encourage students to attend the event (and, if appropriate, provide incentives to do so). Social media (twitter, facebook, etc.) will also be used to advertise the event. All first year students will receive an email invitation reminding them of the event. Student leaders who commonly work with first year students (peer mentors from Learning Communities, the Honors Program, College Ambassadors, First Year Experience and Transition Programs, Undergraduate Research

Ambassadors, etc.) will be invited to serve as conversation guides and to encourage students to attend. Colleges will also be asked to urge their students to attend.

Will you track student participation?

Yes, students NU IDS will be scanned upon entrance to the Lied Center using Huskerscan. We will be able to send lists of students who attended to each college.

What type of follow up will there be?

Students who attend will receive a follow-up thank you email from Chancellor Green. This email will invite students to check out the website that features additional “signature” events focused on diversity and inclusion during the fall semester. Students will also receive a card that features “Tips for Meaningful Conversations”* on one side and a discount for the Union coffee bar on the other side. Our hope is that students will keep the card and refer to it. Instructors can receive free decks of cards to use in their classes upon request.

Who will be the conversation guides?

Any faculty or staff member or upper class student can sign up to be a conversation guide. Deans and directors were asked to nominate people who they think would be especially good in this role and those nominated have received a special invitation from Chancellor Green to participate.

How can faculty, staff, or students become conversation guides?

Those interested can sign up at <http://diversity.unl.edu/husker-dialogues>

Will the conversation guides be trained?

Yes, conversation guides will be asked to participate in a short training: either online or in-person. The online module (which takes about 15 minutes) will describe the goals of the event, outline the schedule and format for the conversations, and describe the questions that will be used, and the “tips for meaningful conversations.” Resources on how to support students’ conversations will also be provided. The one hour in-person training will provide opportunities for conversation guides to “practice” via role play activities. In person trainings are scheduled on August 30 from 12:30-1:30 and August 31 from 4:30-5:30 in the Ubuntu room of the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center.

The Husker Dialogues Steering Committee:

Jan Deeds, Director, Women’s Center and Associate Director, Student Involvement

Maya Evans, undergraduate, Afrikan People’s Union

Adoni Faxas, undergraduate, MASA

Lauren Gayer, Director of Marketing, Student Affairs

Amy Goodburn, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs

Kelli King, Director, William H Thompson Scholars Learning Community

Jake Kirkland, Former Director of JGMC and OASIS

Charlie Foster, Interim Director of JGMC and OASIS

Vaughn Love, Assistant Director, Academic Learning Communities

Linda Major, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Gina Matkin, Associate Professor, AGLEC, and faculty coordinator for William H Thompson Scholars Learning Community
Charlene Maxey-Harris, Associate Professor and Chairperson, University Libraries
Pat McBride, Director of NSE & Associate Dean Enrollment Management
Nancy Mitchell, Director of Undergraduate Education Programs
Linda Moody, Director Center for Civic Engagement
Cheryl Pflueger, Success Coach, First Year Experience and Transition Programs
Heather Reed, Director, First Year Experience and Transition Programs
Veronica Riepe, Director of Student involvement
Brianna Ridenour, president of CBA multicultural student group
Linda Schwartzkopf, Director of Greek Affairs
Pat Tetrault, Director LGBTQA Resource Center
Chris Timm, Associate Director of Career Services
Cay Yamamoto, Director TRIO programs
Keith Zaborowski, Associate Director of University Housing-Residential Life

***Tips for Meaningful Conversations** (will be distributed on cards to students)

1. Listen to understand
2. Ask clarifying questions
3. Speak respectfully to express your own views
4. Use "I" statements
5. Conversations are not debates. The purpose is understanding and meaningful exchange
6. Recognize that there are multiple perspectives
7. Give everyone the opportunity to speak.