



PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN CHALLENGING TIMES



INTRODUCTION

DURING THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE BEEN REMINDED TIME AND AGAIN OF THE UNIQUE WAYS IN WHICH THE DIVISIVENESS AND RANCOR OF THE CURRENT NATIONAL POLITICAL CONTEXT, COUPLED WITH A TREND TOWARD SELF-SEQUESTERING IN ONLINE OR MASS MEDIA ECHO CHAMBERS MANIFEST IN THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT. THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON'S STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF FACE THE CHALLENGE OF DEALING WITH THE FULL SPECTRUM OF EMOTIONS CURRENTLY GRIPPING THE COUNTRY WHILE SIMULANEOUSLY ADDRESSING THE CORE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES WITHIN IT.

WHATEVER THEIR FIELD OF STUDY OR PERSONAL BACKGROUND, TODAY'S UW STUDENTS ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING PROACTIVE, ACCESSIBLE, MEANINGFUL WAYS TO MANAGE THEIR EMOTIONS, MAKE MEANING OF CURRENT EVENTS AND ENGAGE IN CO-CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH CIVIL DISCOURSE AND THOUGHTFUL ACTIONS.

TO THAT END, UW'S DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE HAS DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED FRAMEWORK TO ASSIST OUR CAMPUS PARTNERS WHO OFFER WORKSHOPS, PROGRAMS, SEMINARS AND OTHER TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.



RECOMMENDED FRAMEWORK

Informed by medical and mental health professionals, as well as specialists in diversity and student development from the University of Washington, this framework is intended as a starting point to address concerns raised directly from our students.

Aligned to the guiding principles outlined below and organized according to the desired outcomes explored on the following pages, it is not intended to be a complete solution to the challenges of the current political environment; rather, to afford faculty and staff at the University of Washington the opportunity to engage in a collaborative approach to improving the current campus climate.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Associated programmatic elements and any future iterations of the proposed framework should:

- **Align to the ways we articulate and celebrate the beliefs and perspectives that unite us, including the University of Washington's four pillars:** Leading-Edge Student Experience, Public as a Philosophy, Proven Impact and Innovation Mindset; **and our eight tenets:** Undaunted, Question the Answer, Passion Never Rests, We > Me, Dare to Do, Be the First, Be a World of Good and Together We Will
- Provide a structure, format and content that **models kindness; generosity, i.e., assuming best intent; civil discourse and engagement across difference, as well as mutual understanding**
- **Meet students, staff, faculty and others 'where they are'**, emotionally, socially and geographically, to help them feel - and be - heard and understood
- **Be adapted, expanded and thoughtfully communicated** to meet the needs of special populations



DESIRED OUTCOMES

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REDUCING ANXIETY

Evidence shows that anxiety significantly impairs the quality and consistency of decision making. **Finding ways to help students deal with stress, reduce anxiety, and develop self-management skills** is critical to engaging them in long-term solutions.



PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

Offering tools and experiences that help UW students thoughtfully and critically process information and discern facts will create platforms for discussion and understanding. This is especially true for special populations whose members may not always appreciate the nuances of current debates.



DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES

The thoughtful examination of differing ideas is at the crux of the university experience, yet students often report feeling unheard or are unwilling to listen to alternative perspectives. Through a balanced programming model, **we will promote engagement across ideological divides**, reinforcing our commitment to inclusion while elevating commonalities rather than differences.



CONTACT, EXCHANGE & EQUITY

We know from the research that simple contact with individuals different from oneself is insufficient to change attitudes and beliefs. Instead, **there must be a free and civil exchange of ideas in an environment where all individuals have an equal opportunity** to learn from each other.



MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

UW students are seeking ways to make a difference on campus and in the world at large. Whether their interests lie in political, social, philanthropic or community issues, **connecting students with existing resources and organizations - or providing guidance as to how to form their own** - will help them to channel their passions.

REDUCING ANXIETY

- **Promote the social norming of anxiety** with an educational campaign to share the prevalence and physiological toll of anxiety, while highlighting specific strategies to reduce stress
- **Curate and communicate a comprehensive menu of known campus resources** at the University of Washington to address and reduce stigma related to anxiety, such as Rec Sports' Mindfulness activities, 'Let's Talk' drop-in counseling, Resilience Lab programming and other resources
- Be thoughtful about offering a broad selection of **opportunities that are accessible to students with different needs and identities and that focus on building bridges rather than barriers**
- **Launch a 'What is Your Strategy?' campaign** (in-person workshops and moderated online) to enable people with effective stress management tools, e.g., student veterans, to share their strategies with others
- **Offer interpretations of governmental actions** as they relate to students, providing information and resources online and in person as appropriate



PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

- **Share and aggregate related learning opportunities in and out of the classroom:** classes, events, trainings, lectures, workshops, available in a single, centralized online portal
- **Develop a toolkit to assist students in identifying and becoming engaged in opportunities** to develop skills related to critical thinking, collaboration, personal and community resilience, and effective peer to peer dialogue
- **Host 'Ask Me Anything' sessions: discussions/panels on identities/life experiences that people want to learn about** or understand better but may be afraid to ask about
- **Create a reading list, book club(s), or summer reading assignment** with content and discussion sections geared to engage critical thinking and factual analysis
- **Consider opportunities to engage speaker(s) who model our approach** (civil discourse, talking across differences)
- **Foster opportunities for dialogue** across generations, fields of study, geographies, political views, and other dimensions
 - **Explore common identities**, e.g., being part of the UW community, as a means to further deepen dialogue from disparate points of view and ultimately develop greater unity
 - **Ensure that our own ideologies don't negate our capacity to consider political diversity**, e.g., when it comes to recognizing student leaders in programs such as Husky 100





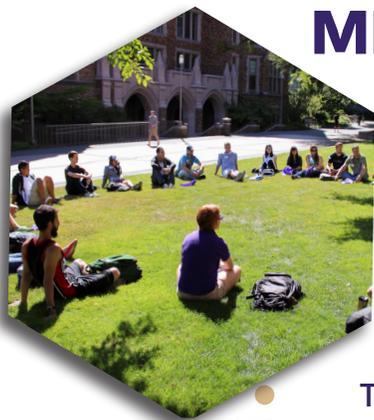
DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES

- **In-person dialogue and community building is key:** Train recognized student leaders within Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and other groups to share their personal stories and perspectives within and across communities, and to engage with others in ways that model the respectful student-to-student dialogue we are promoting in a way that reverberates across campus
- **Build, emphasize and model trust** as a basis for generative conversations and meaningful dialogue across different perspectives and for overcoming common challenges
- Consider ways to **help students understand the difference between experiences/events that are “unsafe” and those that constitute the critical “challenge zone” of learning**, where students may feel themselves needing to stretch to meaningfully consider different points of view
- **Intentionally diversify campus speaking engagements, facilitated conversation groups/ intergroup dialogue (students/faculty/staff) and other opportunities to hear different perspectives**

CONTACT, EXCHANGE & EQUITY

- Identify speakers who come from a certain point of view/perspective but who promote/model effective strategies for engaging others in a way that does not include violence, uncivil behaviors, disrespect, etc. Draw people interested in one speaker/perspective to hear from others. **Host program(s) where these speakers offer a conversation about working effectively together despite differing points of view**
- **Expand opportunities for participation in UW Race & Equity workshops** as a structure for effective engagement, critical thinking and learning and development. Consider ways to make these sessions more attractive to those who think this is not an area of growth and/or interest for them

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT



- Offer small group conversations and intimate panel discussions that focus on effective tools for engagement, involvement, and impacting the “change you want to see” regardless of ideology
- Create student workshops on how to have a healthy debate, disengage fear and emotional reaction, positioning these as skills that will pay off throughout life, e.g., in the job search
- **Train staff and faculty on best practices for having and facilitating difficult, emotionally- or politically charged conversations**
- Encourage students to identify a passion area; **promote and model the many ways they can become actively involved**, e.g., volunteering with a community organization, political campaign, student organization, etc.



SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED TO BE USED AS A TOOL TO SUPPORT A CAMPUS-WIDE CONVERSATION ABOUT HOW BEST TO NURTURE LEARNING, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING ACROSS DIFFERENCE AS WE CONTINUE OUR WORK OF PRESERVING, ADVANCING AND CREATING KNOWLEDGE IN THESE TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY AND RAPID CHANGE.

WE RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING NEXT STEPS:

- Hosting 'Deep Dive' sessions within and across divisions and units as appropriate to understand how existing programs and opportunities align to the proposed framework, and what modifications, enhancements or additions may be necessary, e.g., to better meet the needs of special populations
- Convening unit representatives in functional groups to develop tactical plans for program development and communication across each of the five focus areas/desired outcomes

FOR MORE INFORMATION

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS EFFORT, PLEASE EMAIL STULIFE@UW.EDU

