
“CLIMATE CHANGE: DIALOGUES ACROSS CAMPUS”

DEPARTMENTAL DIALOGUE GUIDE

Successfully addressing the challenge of climate change will require engagement and contributions from all levels of society. Here at _____ (*insert institutions name your*) we are encouraging all departments and programs to participate in a dialogue about climate change and how it connects with their respective areas of focus. Thank you for taking the lead with organizing a dialogue among the members of your department.

This guide has been developed to help you structure your department’s dialogue on this pressing issue of our time. The guide includes three sections:

- I. Steps Towards Hosting a Dialogue (p. 2)
- II. Suggested Structure of the Dialogue (pp. 3-5)
- III. Resources about Climate Change (p. 6)

Thanks again for organizing your departmental dialogue! Good luck, and have fun!

This guide was developed by David E. Hall and the Portland State University Steering Group for Focus the Nation. Its use and distribution is encouraged. Modify as suits your needs.

I. STEPS TOWARDS HOSTING A DIALOGUE

- **Determine your audience**
 - Faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduates? Plan to convene the people that make the most sense given the composition of your department. If an academic department, we highly encourage the inclusion of faculty members in the dialogue.
- **Set up a time and place for the dialogue**
 - We suggest working within any pre-existing structure, such as regular colloquiums or staff meetings where you know that most people within your department already have the time reserved. To establish the global warming dialogue, you may seek to meet with key figures within the department to gain their support before the session. Regarding the space, we suggest a space that enables seating participants in a circle.
- **Get the word out**
 - Promote the dialogue through the formal and informal communication channels within your department in the preceding month/weeks. Be sure to send a reminder out a day or two before the actual event.
- **Make information available**
 - We suggest making one or more reading available to the participants prior to dialogue. A recommended article on the science of global warming is:
 - Houghton, J. (2005). Global Warming. *Reports on Progress in Physics*, 68, 1343-1403. (*electronic version available through Vikat*).
 - You might consider locating an article that specifically speaks to the connections between your department's area of focus and the issue of global warming. A good on-line source for more information, including the basics on the science of climate change, can be found at:
 - <http://www.focusthenation.org/resources.php>
- **Establish a facilitator**
 - The facilitator can be yourself, another respected member of your department, or perhaps a third party that can serve as moderator for the conversation. Whoever plays this role, they should remain truly moderate.
- **Host the dialogue**
 - Prepare the space beforehand—again, we suggest a circular seating arrangement. See the suggested structure of the dialogue outlined below.
- **After the dialogue**
 - Help coordinate individual and departmental interest in further action beyond the dialogue. See list of resources below.
 - Spread the word about the success of your dialogue and encourage other departments to conduct their own.

II. SUGGESTED STRUCTURE OF THE DIALOGUE

In this section italicized text is offered as notes to the facilitator. Non-italicized text is offered as suggested wording for use in introducing, conducting and closing the dialogue session. We suggest that you copy and paste this structure, and then work it to fit your department—particularly in terms of which questions to put forward (see (C)).

A) Welcome & Overview of Focus the Nation & (*Your Institution's*) involvement

Thank you for joining us today at our departmental dialogue on global warming. This gathering is just one of many occurring across campus and is part of a much larger national nonpartisan educational initiative, Focus the Nation. Focus the Nation seeks to serve as a catalyst for building the necessary individual, institutional and political will to successfully achieve global warming solutions. (*Your institution*) is committed to participating in this effort. The “Focus” initiative will culminate on January 31, 2008 in a national teach-in engaging millions of students and citizens with political leaders and decision makers about Global Warming Solutions.

Understanding the problem and achieving the solutions will require contributions from all levels of society. As a university we can make a significant contribution through education, research and operations. As such, each department on campus (academic and non-academic) is being encouraged to convene an internal dialogue focused on the issue of climate change. Today we will take this opportunity to consider climate change and how it links with our work. In addressing this topic together, the purpose of the dialogue will simply be to learn from one another and explore what the connections and possibilities may be. If anyone is interested in doing so, they can identify potential involvement in educational activities as well.

B) Share basic definition of "dialogue" & outline guidelines for the dialogue

Dialogue can occur in many forms, but not all forms of communication are dialogue. Our thinking on the concept aligns with the simple definition offered by the [Co-Intelligence Institute](#): ***dialogue is shared exploration towards greater understanding, connection, or possibility.***¹

Collectively, we intend to make this a safe, open space where people can express their perspectives, identify the known and unknown, and generally have a constructive conversation that may inspire action.

Towards this end, we ask that individually everyone respects the following guidelines (*if possible, have these guidelines written in a visible location*):

- Share personal perspective, rather than attempt to persuade
- Listen carefully to the perspectives shared by others
- Remain open-minded & minimize reactivity

¹ For more on the concept of dialogue, visit: www.co-intelligence.org/P-dialogue.html

- Welcome quiet space between comments
- Avoid monopolizing the conversation—give room for others to speak

C) Suggested questions

Review this list of questions and select those questions for inclusion in your dialogue that are best suited for your program. In deciding which questions would be most appropriate and constructive, consider your department's role in the university and community, whether there is already a history of discussion around global warming, and generally the department's overall culture (e.g., should the conversation be structured more academically or operationally). You might seek counsel with other members of your department about which questions to prioritize for inclusion.

Core Question:

- What are the connections between the problem of global warming and our discipline/department/program?

Additional Questions (*select a few to include in your dialogue*):

- What are your thoughts and impressions about the issue of climate change?
- Why is having this conversation important to our discipline/department/program?
- Do we have a responsibility to the greater community to discuss this and act?
- What would undergraduates like to see from our program in terms of education on this issue?
- What can our discipline/department contribute towards a fuller understanding of climate change and achieving global warming solutions? In terms of our operations? In terms of education? In terms of research?
- What can we do in the near term, and what can we do in the long term?
- What are the opportunities for us as individual scholars and/or as a department to contribute to the effort?
- What would it take for our department to position itself as a meaningful contributor within 5-10 years?
- Given the inter-disciplinary nature of the global warming issue, what are the relationships and partnerships we would need to form with other departments or community organizations?
- What are the greatest barriers or concerns held about moving in this direction?
- Focus the Nation is happening on Jan 31, 2008. Should we get involved? How so?

D) Conclude the dialogue session

Suggested script:

Our time today is coming to an end. I'd like to thank each of you for participating in this dialogue and exploring the topic of global climate change together. I hope that your consideration of this topic continues. If you have further interest in pursuing the

topic further, I have prepared a list of resources to lead you towards more information and activities on addressing the challenge of global warming.

Also, please note January 31, 2008 on your calendars. This is the day of Focus the Nation, where activities will occur all across the country towards enacting global warming solutions. *(Insert brief summary of your institutions plans for FTN events and/or contact information of leaders of you institutions efforts).*

Thanks again, and have a great day!

Make available a list of resources for people to further pursue the topic if they are interested (see part III).

III. RESOURCES ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

We encourage that you spend some time pulling together other resources/ information that more clearly connects the focus area(s) of your department with the subject of climate change. For example, list conferences or journals that have a history of publishing research on topics like global warming. We have made a modest effort to start this list for you.

General Resources:

- Focus the Nation's resource page:
 - www.focusthenation.org/resources.php
- *If applicable, insert your institutions web address for sustainability*

Suggested Readings:

- Houghton, J. (2005). Global Warming. *Reports on Progress in Physics*, 68, 1343-1403. PDF available at: http://ej.iop.org/links/rgtfbB7bQ/dKtss6QQ3BGU6kDhav5vpA/rpp5_6_R02.pdf
- "Climate Change and Health: Challenges for an Interdisciplinary Approach," J. A. Patz, *EM: The Air & Waste Management Association's Magazine for Environmental Managers*, 35-41 (March 1999).

Relevant Conferences, Journals or Professional Associations:

Insert info that is appropriate for the department that is your target audience.

Thanks once again for you efforts towards raising awareness about climate change and how it relates to our individual and collective work. And, thanks for helping to build Focus towards January 31, 2008, the day the political tide will turn towards enacting true climate change solutions!

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