

Project Title Speed Diversity Dialogue: A Multicultural Excellence Training Workshop

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**What are you proposing to do and how will you do it?**

We propose to host Speed Diversity Dialogue (SDD), a research based, brief, low-cost, and engaging multicultural training, for Freshmen and Sophomore students enrolled in the CORE Friday series. The SDD workshop increases awareness of diversity, empathy, motivation for social inclusion, value of ethnic and cultural differences, cultural sensitivity, and social action skills in college students. Modeled after other “speed” trainings (e.g., speed mentoring), this training will be implemented as a 90-minute CORE Friday event at the beginning of both the Fall and Spring 2017 semesters. The SDD workshop has two components: one is an interactive didactic session where attendees dialogue face-to-face using a series of prompts designed to break down stereotypes and heighten awareness for diversity; the second element is a didactic learning component where attendees are guided through a slideshow presentation about multicultural concepts and research, illustrating the importance of diversity, barriers to inclusivity, the meaning of multicultural excellence (awareness, knowledge, skills, and social action), and how to promote empathy for all people in their everyday lives.

According to the Office of Undergraduate Education, the College One CORE Course series introduces students “to the issues facing informed citizens in the 21st century and provide the tools needed to address them.” A notable element of the CORE series is CORE Friday, a series of events based on a wide variety of topics designed to expose students to happenings here at UC Merced. Hosting SDD as a CORE Friday event would allow students to begin their academic journey with an appreciation of the diversity embedded within our campus.

**How will the program contribute to and enhance UC Merced’s campus climate as a more equitable and inclusive place to study, research and work?**

Part of the beauty of UC Merced is the opportunity to study with students from all walks of life. According to the latest UC Merced IRDS report, approximately 86% of the undergraduate population hails from an ethnic minority background, and more than 60% are first-generation students. As for graduate students, about 59% identify with an ethnic group other than Caucasian. For both undergraduate and graduate students, gender enrollment is approximately equal. With such a diverse population, understanding barriers to inclusivity is crucial to a temperate campus climate.

This concept is all the more salient due to the latest Campus Climate report from the Chancellor’s Office. Between one-quarter to one-third of the student body do not have a favorable view of the state of our campus’ endeavors to promote diversity

appreciation. What's more is that a considerable number of individuals have reported experiencing hostile or exclusionary conduct due to their identity, whether that be gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Though these actions are unacceptable, there is empirical evidence to suggest that prejudicial attitudes against out-group members can be reduced if individuals have the opportunity to interact with one another in a meaningful and mutually-beneficial way (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994).

Speed Diversity Dialogue is founded on the Contact Hypothesis (Pettigrew, 1998), whereby the most effective way to reduce prejudice between groups is to promote inter-group collaboration following four guidelines:

1. All involved groups must have 'equal status', which is to say no one group is preferred over another. During SDD, all groups have an equal opportunity to add their experiences to the conversation.
2. All involved groups must work together for mutual gain. SDD encourages inter-group interaction in a fun, yet powerful manner.
3. All involved groups must work toward a common goal. In the context of SDD, all groups are guided to reflect often about their own barriers to diversity awareness, and how they can promote inclusivity in their own lives.
4. There must be an authority that mentors the groups by establishing a safe place for inter-group conduct. SDD encourages collaboration by setting ground rules for safe and respectful relations between groups.

By using the Contact Hypothesis framework, Speed Diversity Dialogue ultimately creates an inclusive atmosphere that allows participants to speak about their personal feelings and experiences with little fear of retaliation. In fact, much of our own research on the effectiveness of SDD has shown that many individuals gain new insight into the experiences of minority groups, and increased empathy for those who are less privileged in society. Afterward, attendees of the workshop often leave feeling empowered to promote social change in light of multicultural excellence, which could only benefit our diverse campus.

#### References:

Gaertner, S. L., Rust, M. C., Dovidio, J. F., Bachman, B. A., & Anastasio, P. A. (1994). The contact hypothesis: The role of a common ingroup identity on reducing intergroup bias. *Small Group Research*, 25, 224-249.

Pettigrew, T. F. (1998). Intergroup contact theory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 65-85.

**Describe how this project is a new, high impact, collaborative, experimental and/or sustainable approach to enhancing and/or addressing an area of campus climate.**

SDD is designed to work not only as an introduction to the Big 8 of Diversity (disability, culture, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status and religion), but to engage students in dialogue with each other throughout the semester on these diversity components. Research on SDD reveals that participants find SDD engaging both intellectually and emotionally, and that it increases participant empathy for diverse populations and willingness to engage with others of diverse backgrounds.

As of this writing, SDD has been held around the United States, as well as in Canada, with professionals, students, faculty, and staff alike. The next frontier for the SDD team is to host the workshop here at UC Merced. As the Central Valley is one of the most culturally diverse areas of California, individuals who experience SDD can work for positive social change as soon as they step out their front door. Moreover, UC Merced will only continue to be diverse, and as new students pass through our wonderful campus before stepping out into the world, SDD can be there at the beginning stages of their academic careers to enlighten their minds toward appreciation for people from all walks of life.

**Describe the expected difference(s) the project will make on the issues addressed, the audience(s) it will serve, and the number of people it will affect.**

The primary goal of the Office of Campus Climate is to assess feelings of, and promote, inclusivity at UC Merced. As such, SDD is in a prime position to enhance appreciation of diversity because the workshop is framed around providing insight into the benefit of diverse perspectives, as well as guiding students toward understanding barriers to their own sense of inclusivity.

SDD hosted as a CORE Friday event will directly serve first and second year students attending this workshop. It is estimated by Tom Hothem, the co-director of CORE, that there are around 1600 students per academic year that take CORE 1, and they must attend a number of CORE Friday events. It is also estimated that around 300 students attend any given CORE Friday, which means approximately 600 students may be affected by the SDD workshop material per semester. Further, according to the Enrollment Management Council, in regards to the 2020 Project, one pathway may allow up to 10,000 students to be enrolled at UC Merced by the 2020 deadline. Looking more broadly to the campus as a whole, successful implementation of the SDD workshop in the CORE Friday series may provide a springboard for SDD to be utilized in staff and faculty development trainings. Thus, SDD may have an increasingly prominent role in campus climate in the near future.

**How will the project bring together two or more campus entities, advance mutual goals and/or share knowledge? Specifically identify how the project will be integrated into the activities of teaching, research or public service.**

Hosting SDD will require the coordination of the workshop facilitators (listed below), the CORE Organizing Committee, and any undergraduate and/or graduate clubs that are all vested in creating an inclusive atmosphere on campus. Cooperation between each of these parties is necessary to properly implement SDD into the CORE Friday series, for assessing the effectiveness of SDD at increasing empathy for minority groups of the Big 8 of Diversity, and for promoting the appreciation of diversity.

The data resulting from SDD will be shared with both the CORE Friday Committee and the Office of Campus Climate for two important reasons. First, knowledge of the efficacy of implementation, and the utility, of SDD in the CORE Friday series will help the Organizing Committee further evaluate and evolve their program to best fit their designed outcomes. Second, SDD data on student perceptions of diversity and multicultural excellence may provide the Office of Campus Climate unique insight into how the student body is internalizing the meaning of diversity, and if empathy toward outgroups lasts over time. This insight may be invaluable to both the CORE Friday Committee and the Office of Campus Climate for continuing progress on creating an inclusive atmosphere at UC Merced.

**Describe the leadership, capacity and qualifications of the individual or group to implement the project.**

Speed Diversity Dialogue was co-founded by Dr. Elisa Velasquez-Andrade and Daniel Mello, B.A.. Dr. Velasquez-Andrade is a tenured professor at Sonoma State University who specializes in cross-cultural psychology. Daniel is a current graduate student of psychological science at UC Merced specializing in ethnic health disparities based on social inequities. Together, both Dr. Velasquez-Andrade and Mr. Mello have multiple years of experience shaping and hosting the SDD workshop around the nation, as well as in Canada.

Our undergraduate co-host, and soon-to-be UC Merced Alum, is Gracie Briggs. She is currently the Academic co-chair, Fundraising co-chair, and Social chair of the UC Merced Chapter of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. Gracie's dedication to social justice has proved to be invaluable, as she has co-organized SDD at UC Merced for the Spring 2016 semester.

**Describe how likely the project is to be continued and incorporated or replicated by other organizations on campus and demonstrate why.**

Foremost, SDD aligns with UC Merced's Principles of Community because both are founded on acknowledging and embracing individuals from all backgrounds. Importantly, SDD is very low-cost, requiring mostly time and space to hold the workshop, with few economic demands in the form of printed diversity-related handouts for attendees. Further, graduate student and co-founder of SDD Daniel Mello is available to host and train future facilitators from interested departments in order for SDD to become an essential part of UC Merced's diversity mission.

**Provide the full timeline - from start to completion - for the project.**

Implementing SDD at UC Merced will take one full academic year. At the beginning of each semester, SDD will be hosted as a Core Friday event for Freshmen and Sophomore students. At the beginning and end of each workshop, students will be asked to take a multicultural excellence survey. After one month, and at the end of each semester, students will be asked to re-take the same survey, providing longitudinal data to assess the effectiveness of SDD.

Here is a breakdown of the project timeline:

FALL 2016:

- Beginning of Semester: Host the SDD workshop, including the pre- & post-workshop multicultural excellence survey
- After First Month of Semester: administer the multicultural excellence survey once more to students who attended the workshop
- End of Semester: administer the final multicultural excellence survey to students who attended the workshop

SPRING 2017:

- Beginning of Semester: Host the SDD workshop, including the pre- & post-workshop multicultural excellence survey
- After First Month of Semester: administer the multicultural excellence survey once more to students who attended the workshop
- End of Semester: administer the final multicultural excellence survey to students who attended the workshop

At project completion, the data will be analyzed, and a report will be compiled that outlines the implementation and effectiveness of SDD at UC Merced as part of the CORE Friday series.

**What are your project goals and expected outcomes.**

With regards to implementing SDD at UC Merced, we expect to hit each phase of the project during both semesters on time and without significant difficulties. Also, we expect to produce a report that will detail successes and challenges of project implementation, as well as the effectiveness of SDD in promoting inclusivity.

In accordance with previous research, we expect a notable increase in the awareness of diversity on our campus, as well as in our community. We also expect students to report more multicultural excellence along the lines of awareness about the Big 8 of Diversity, knowledge about barriers to inclusivity, skills to effectively address inequity, and to feel motivated to practice positive social action.

**What is your definition of success? How will you measure it?**

Successful implementation of the SDD workshop across a full academic year will be defined based on three outstanding criteria: 1) the efficacy, and overall feasibility, of

hosting SDD with the large number of students enrolled in the CORE Friday program, 2) the match between SDD and the CORE Friday curriculum, and 3) an increase in awareness and empathy for minority groups of the Big 8, as well as multicultural excellence development among students.

Due to the sheer scale of UC Merced's growing student body, implementing SDD in the CORE Friday program will involve precise collaboration between the workshop facilitators and the program leadership in order to accommodate the approximately 300 students who are expected to participate at the beginning of each semester. Such a large number of participants will require well-coordinated logistics, including but not limited to appropriate room reservation, materials printing, and guiding students through the interactive session of the workshop. The efficacy of hosting SDD as part of the CORE Friday program, as well as the ultimate sustainable feasibility, will be measured by qualitative input from facilitators and program leaders after the academic year.

According to UC Merced's Office of Undergraduate Education, "CORE Friday events round out the weekly lectures and discussions with films, panel discussion, theatrical productions, or guest lectures that illuminate ideas presented during the week, and explore alternative views." We believe SDD would fit well within the mission outlined for CORE Fridays because it allows students a space to consider socially important topics based on research. How well SDD fits into the CORE Friday curriculum would be assessed by administering a short survey after the academic year to the program leaders on their judgement of SDD's utility in their program vision.

The overarching goal of the SDD workshop is to increase the appreciation of diversity in all its forms, as well as teach participants about the barriers to inclusivity that we all have, and how to use the tenets of multicultural excellence to promote positive social change in their everyday lives. As such, we expect students to leave SDD with an increased sense of awareness and empathy for minority groups of the Big 8 of Diversity, as well as have an understanding of multicultural excellence. These outcomes will be assessed via an 18-item survey designed to assess student learning of the SDD material.

**What tools will you use to collect the data needed to measure the progress and success of each expected outcome? When will you use them?**

As stated above, workshop implementation efficacy, and alignment with CORE Friday program curriculum, will be assessed via a short survey designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative perspectives about their experiences with the SDD workshop. This survey will be administered to program leaders at the end of the academic year, after SDD has been implemented for two consecutive semesters.

Pending IRB Approval, student learning of the SDD material will be assessed via an 18-item survey, where each item is on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) Likert

scale. This survey has been normed to undergraduate college students through previous research on the effectiveness of SDD. This assessment will be given to participants a total of 4 times: 1) At the very beginning of the workshop, before SDD begins, 2) immediately after the SDD workshop, 3) one month after the SDD workshop, and 4) at the end of the semester. In total, we expect to have 4 timepoints of data for each semester, totaling approximately 600 unique participants. This longitudinal data would yield exceptional insight into the effectiveness of SDD at UC Merced.

### **PROJECT SPONSORING UNIT**

All projects must be sponsored by a UC Merced student organization, or campus department/ by-law unit, School or Graduate Group. The sponsoring unit is responsible for administering and reporting on funds. Project managers must be current UC Merced campus members. Budget Managers must be current UC Merced staff members.

UCM Sponsor The Graduate Pedagogy Association

Budget Manager Daniel Mello, Treasurer of the The Graduate Pedagogy Association

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