
END OF THE YEAR 2018-19

Civil Discourse Lab Department of Communication



Our mission is to strengthen the ability for our students and community members to conduct meaningful conversations, collaborate, and weigh decisions around sometimes difficult but important topics to a civil society through research, engaged teaching and praxis.

Enacting Strategic Priorities with Civil Discourse

In just 18 months since its launch, the Civil Discourse Lab (CDL) has had more than 70 student members affiliate and attend at least one event. The CDL enacts all four of UNH's strategic priorities: expanding academic excellence; enhancing student success and well being; embracing New Hampshire, and building financial strength. Students have logged more than 437 hours of structured lectures and trainings on campus and have been rewarded with "Lab hours." Lab hours were also accumulated by volunteering to facilitate for UNH and the outside community. Cumulatively, CDL students have volunteered more than 250 hours of facilitation time and have participated in more that 687 hours of extracurricular lecture or training time in this academic year. This report will demonstrate how the CDL is tackling UNH strategic priorities.

HIGHLIGHTS

By the Numbers

5 Students awarded the 100-hour Service Award, including educational hours they sought beyond structured CDL events and trainings

17 Students awarded the 25 - Hour Leadership Pin

70 Active members across disciplines including Communication, Philosophy, Sustainability, Journalism, & Political Science

250 Cumulative volunteer facilitation hours

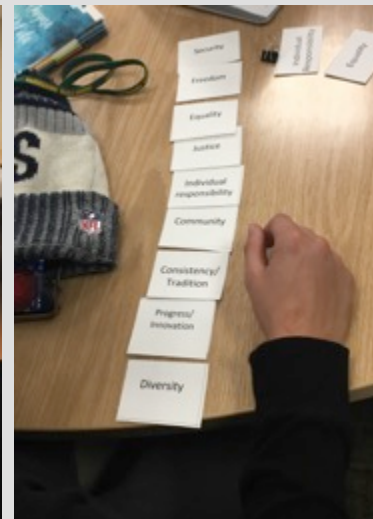
687 Total extra-curricular lecture, training, & facilitation hours in 2018-19

Expand Academic Excellence

The CDL expands academic excellence with experiential learning. Several courses contributed to a robust curriculum fostering the mission of the CDL and demonstrating active learning pedagogies. Professor Jennifer Borda designed a new course focused on **Democratic Deliberation** for senior capstone students. Her class deeply engaged with deliberation and rhetoric culminating with the design of programs that would launch vital discussion on the American Dream covering topics such as: Women of Color CEOs, Raising the Minimum Wage, and Free Higher Education.

Professor Lawrence Prelli's course, **Environmental Communication and Rhetoric**, teaches students to do analyses of public communication about environmental problems. Those analyses are guided by precepts of rhetorical theory in disclosing how environmental problems are framed as issues, the alternative stands on those issues, and how framings of problems constrain responses to them. Students worked together in groups of three or four to conduct a semester long case study of communicative efforts in a local seacoast town in which they analyzed, evaluated, and responded to local communicative efforts.

Professor Sheila McNamee's **Seminar on Mediation** introduced students to a relational approach to conflict mediation. Students learned how to distinguish traditional individualist approaches to conflict resolution from the dialogic approach, which focuses on generating new forms of understanding as opposed to agreement or adjudication. Each week, students engage in mediations that put the concepts discussed during that week into practice. And in **Dialogue, Teamwork, and Conflict**, Professor Jack Lannamann led students to explore dialogue as both a condition of being human and as a method for generating change or resolving conflict. Student teams generated four general domains to explore: personal relationships, economic systems, climate change, and health care.



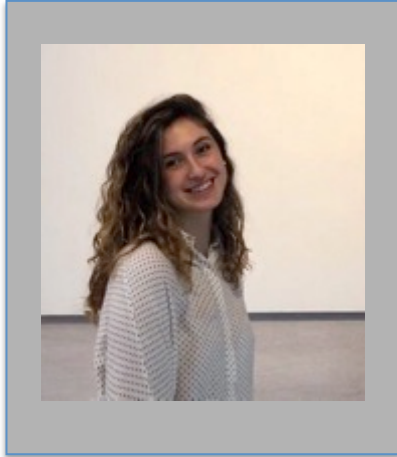
Guest Speaker Martín Carcasson leads a community-values prioritizing exercise in Professor Jennifer Borda's class

Our Signature Stories & Voices Event: An Interactive Dialogue Engaging the Stigma of Addiction and Hope

"I had to let you know that all of my CDL hours and at least half of the course work from this semester, if not all of it, just became incredibly useful. I was invited to be a member of the new COLA Student Advisory Board. We had our first meeting on Friday last week and this evening I sent out an email with contact information for everyone, a link to a shared Google drive folder, a survey about scheduling for future meetings, and a Google form about logistics. I offered to write agendas and facilitate meetings to keep us on track with our goals as well as offer to teach people how to write basic minutes for meetings. This [Collaborative Leadership, CMN 562] has turned out to be one of the most unexpectedly and directly useful courses I have taken in my college career so I have to say THANK YOU!"

On April 10, 2019, eighty-three people participated in our signature public dialogue event. Nineteen students spent the semester learning about dialogue, deliberation, expertise, neutrality, and opioid addiction in Professor Renee Heath's seminar, **Public Dialogue and Deliberation**. Students interviewed relevant stakeholders in the community, such as those recovering from addiction, first responders, and legislators. This work informed the design of a three-hour event that brought together diverse perspectives to consider the possibilities for individual recovery; and legal, medical, and social systems' role in that recovery. Students from the class, and CDL student volunteers, facilitated the dialogue and policy discussion, which included community members from recovery, law enforcement and local politicians. The program implemented an Appreciative Inquiry methodology. The event's report can be found on Facebook.

Enhance Student Success and Well-Being



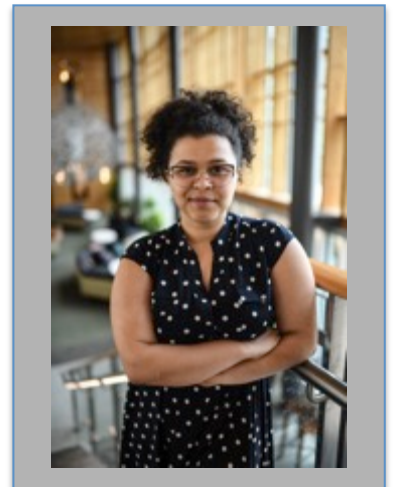
Lucy, Founding Affiliate

“Just wanted to share this with you. Classes like yours prepared me so well for the job I have...Nothing on my resume was worth my work with the CDL.” --Lucy, Class of 2018, CDL Affiliate, Field & Support Strategy Coordinator, American Heart Association

“Throughout the semester, our seminar members benefited from a growing cross-pollination of ideas and experiences made possible by the CDL. Several students took part in CDL events or were active members of the CDL and those students brought novel ideas and concrete examples from their experiences. This enhanced the course and is a clear demonstration that the CDL is providing not only a service to the broader community, but also a significant educational benefit to our students.” --Communication Professor Jack Lannamann

“The foundation of the CDL has greatly reinforced my understanding of the concepts I have learned in my classes. Because of this program, I have confidence not only in my skills as a communicator and facilitator, but also in my ability to speak publically and demonstrate my leadership abilities in a respectful, inclusive manner, maintaining the dignity of those I engage with, a philosophy demonstrated and encouraged by faculty.” --Sam, CDL Fellow, Spring 2019

“When I started here at UNH, I was sure that I would just be walking away with a degree and I would spend two years fending for myself. Being a part of the CDL and now being a Treat Fellow have profoundly affected my experience both at UNH and as a member of the academic community. I cannot find all the words to truly describe how thankful I am for the opportunities to work with you and study in your courses. Nor can I tell you how validating this first semester has been.” --Lauren, Transfer Student, CDL Affiliate and Treat Fellow 2018-19



Lauren, CDL Affiliate 2018-19

“After taking Collaborative Leadership, my interest in the CDL grew and led me to attend presentations and other meetings as much as my previous schedule would allow. In just one short semester, the connections I generated with speakers and my peers, as well as the skills I obtained, showed me how valuable the CDL is for my career and future endeavors.” --Katie, CDL Affiliate, 2019

Embrace New Hampshire

New Partners & Extra Curricular Service

In addition to our Stories and Voices event, we embraced New Hampshire with several new partnerships that called for our students to help design and facilitate meaningful events. Our partners have ranged from UNH NSF Grant recipients and scientists on climate change, to a collaboration of community members and scholars hosting a film series in Portsmouth. This year, we partnered with New Futures, SOS Recovery, and the UNH Art Museum to facilitate conversations on topics of importance to our community. On average, community members comprise 15-20% of event attendees.

At the invitation of Professor Lucy Salyer (History) and the [Strawberry Banke Museum collaborative](#), our students facilitated six dialogue events that followed the film series on immigration, *Becoming an American*, in Portsmouth, NH.

We were approached by student leaders from the [Middle Eastern Cultural Association \(MECA\)](#) and [Hillel](#), the Jewish student association, to design and implement a discussion for students regarding the conflict among Israelis and Palestinians. Assistant Program Director, Jocelyn Vierzen (CMN & SUST, senior) and Fellow Eva Ford (CMN & Philosophy) worked with Professor Heath and student leaders for more than seven weeks to create a program that asked participants to examine how they came to understand the conflict in the ways in which they did. The program (right) was grounded in communication theory on turning points and memorable messages. More than 70 persons, *including community members* attended.

The [University of New Hampshire Museum of Art](#) also partnered with us to provide a unique bi-weekly dialogue experience to accompany its exhibit, *Aftermath*. Museum attendees were invited to join three structured dialogues as part of their viewing experience. CDL students also facilitated a discussion after a viewing of the culminating film event, *Lemon Tree*. And [The Sustainability Institute](#) led the efforts for the *21 Day Racial Equity Challenge (REC)*, where nine CDL students participated in the web-based curriculum linking food sustainability issues with racial justice. CDL students also facilitated weekly discussion groups regarding the lessons led by CDL Fellows.



In April, students and community members discuss the stigma of addiction and its affect on policy

Israel and Palestine:
DECONSTRUCTING OUR STORIES

PRESENTED BY: THE CIVIL DISCOURSE LAB, HILLEL, THE MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION, AND UNH SOCRATIC SOCIETY

Thank you to our experts -
Fredrik Meiton: Assistant Professor of History, expert in the Arab-Israeli conflict
Cesar Rebellon: Professor of Sociology, crime and conflict expert

Discussion Guidelines

EVERY VOICE AND EXPERIENCE IS VALID | MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY TO THE HIGHEST EXTENT | LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND AND AVOID INTERRUPTING | DON'T ARGUE, CHALLENGE, OR DEBATE | FOCUS ON THE ISSUE, NOT THE PERSON | AVOID GENERALIZING

Introductions
Introduce yourself and tell us something important to you outside of this topic. Share why you are here tonight.

Prompt 1: Tracing the Origins of Our Stories
Prepare a chronological narrative of your viewpoints on the right. What do these messages and events mean to you? How have these messages and events influenced your thinking?

Your Memorable Messages and Turning Points
Add extra points as you see fit

Thank you to our sponsors: Responsible Governance and Sustainable Citizenship Project; Brodeur Partners; Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity

Speakers Supporting Civil Discourse Priorities

UNH Alumna Andrea “Andy” Coville, CEO of Brodeur Partners is a benefactor of the CDL, has hired a recent CDL graduate, and has shared her firm’s research with the UNH community. Andy spoke to a crowd of fifty students and faculty on “Gen-Z and the Age of Sensory Journalism.” Andy also spoke exclusively to CDL students regarding the skills they are gaining and their relevancy to the workplace. Andy is the author of the book, *Relevance* (Routledge, 2014). She, and her husband and partner John Brodeur, have welcomed interns from UNH and see vital connections between the work that students are doing on campus with the workplace.



*Andrea “Andy” Coville,
Journalism Class of 1982*

Martín Carcasson, Director of the Colorado State Center for Public Deliberation, was the keynote to a crowd of 73 in October speaking on Wicked Problems: The Critical Role of University Centers, Faculty, and Students as Key Local Resources for Deliberative Engagement.



Calendar of Major Events 2018-19

Becoming American Series: Sept. 6, 27, October 4, 18, November 7, & 15, 2018

Deconstructing Our Stories: Israel and Palestine November 1, 2018

Martín Carcasson, Tackling Wicked Problems Lecture October 22, 2018

Andy Coville, Gen Z and Sensory Journalism Lecture and Visit March 21, 2019

Aftermath in Partnership with UNH Art Museum Feb 7, 20, March 7 & March 27, 2019

21-Day Racial Equity Challenge April 4, 11, & 18, 2019

2nd Annual Stories & Voices: An Interactive Dialogue Engaging the Stigma of Addiction and Stories of Hope April 10, 2019

COMING IN 2019-20

Alexander Heffner

October 16, 2019

Heffner is host of *The Open Mind* on PBS. He has covered American politics, civic life and Millennials since the 2008 presidential campaign.



Democracy Now!

Heffner’s visit will coincide with a series of events coordinated with campus partners. On October 2, students will participate in the For Freedoms dialogues in collaboration with the UNH Art Museum. They will tackle pressing political issues.

In Spring 2020 the CDL will host a workshop that explores the role of Contemplative Meditation and Listening.

What People Are Saying

Becoming American Series

"Profound films with multiple perspectives. Small group discussion was a great sharing experience."

"Excellent UNH leader!"

"Small group: Profound. We could SEE each other and have more opportunities to interact - I didn't want our discussion to end. PLEASE organize it this way in the future! Only regret is that I didn't have a time turner because I really would have liked to be part of ALL the groups."

"The process was welcoming. I loved the stories people told."

Deconstructing Our Stories: Israel & Palestine

"I learned the thoughts of people from different background[s] on this topic."

"I learned a lot."

"[The Program Guide] guided conversation but did not define it."

"It was reaffirmed to me that similar backgrounds don't have to mean similar opinions."

"Having civil discussions with those who hold opposing views is uncommon, I learned we agree on much more."

"The prompts and facilitators were helpful."

"I learned some new vocabulary and historical events from the new point of the other 'side'."

"I came to this ignorant and I'm pleased to say I know a bit more."

"Facilitators kept the program moving and did a good job organizing/speaking."

"The programs and timeline were phenomenally organized and helpful to the discussion."

Stories and Voices Series: An Interactive Dialogue Engaging the Stigma of Addiction & Stories of Hope

"This was great. Never been to anything like it at UNH!"

"Had many different proposed solutions from so many great minds coming together."

"Amazing program!"

"Great facilitators!"

"It was great to have experts."

"The facilitator at the table was great at facilitating."

"Keep it up! What's the next subject?"

Thank you, important topic, appreciate facilitation."

"I learned about policies that need to be changed."

"I learned so much that I didn't know but [what] was most interesting was others' opinions and perspectives."

"A lot of the facts in the program book were cool."

"The questions were thought-provoking; the ground rules set a beautiful tone of respect and curiosity that we wove through the night—as well as a tone of understanding. Thank you."

"More events, loved it!"



Reflection

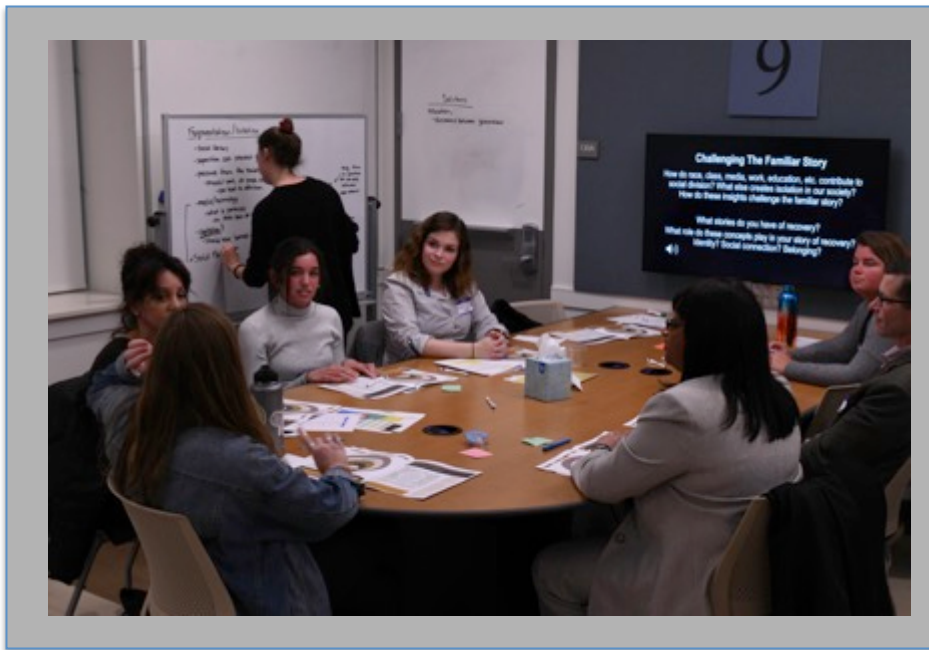
Of course, we also asked people what we could improve, too.

It's clear the quality of conversations is directly related to the diversity at the table so we continue to work on methods to seat folks with diverse perspectives together.

Some participants also were taken off guard by the dialogue format as we are conditioned to expect a lecture or an expert model of communication.

A common theme is that participants want more time to discuss things. We think this means we are doing our job!

Research



Publishing

Several publications advanced ideas around civil discourse. Heath (2018) published a study on the work of New Hampshire Listens of the UNH Carsey Institute, and the role of vulnerability in public dialogue (*Journal of Public Deliberation*). Lannamann and Heath (2019) published their Taos Institute conference presentation *Constructing Activism: Dialogue and Advocacy*. Heath and Borda have utilized their work with the CDL to develop a theory of *Civility as Discursive Opening*, in their upcoming paper by the same name.

Grant Awards

The CDL partnered with the UNH Discovery Program, to win a \$25,000 planning grant from the [Teagle Foundation](#). The grant will support a planning workshop for faculty interested in innovating around civic curricula, including a public participation experience with the CDL as a part of UNH students' first year experience. The workshop will be guided by Tufts University Tisch College of Civic Life Faculty Directors, Peter Levine and Nancy Thomas. The grant will also allow for competitive mini-grants for UNH faculty who are committed to collaborating through curricula and course design. The grant is a precursor to a larger implementation grant that could radically alter the first-year experience and fertilize cutting-edge research on the role of universities in civic participation, which is a vital role of the "First in the Nation" state.

In fall 2018, the [AAC & U](#) awarded the CDL a highly competitive mini-grant to support faculty strategic planning around civic education with an eye on pipelines beyond graduation.

The Responsible Governance and Sustainable Citizenship Project funded a post-doctorate position that will support and help implement research on the work of the Lab in 2019-20. The CDL welcomes Lydia Reinig (Ph.D., University of Colorado, Boulder) in the fall. Dr. Reinig will also teach an Introduction to Civil Discourse class open to all majors and a complementary research capstone course associated with the Stories and Voices event in the spring.



Building Financial Strength

Generous support from the Responsible Governance and Sustainable Citizen Project and Brodeur Partners allowed for three, part-time student Fellow positions each semester, and for the invaluable support of a part-time student intern/Assistant Program Director, as well as support to our Administrative Assistant.

Grant and donor support also funded the dinners and meals associated with student training and community events. Students participating in CDL training events often attend immediately after classes and miss the opportunity to eat.

Additionally, external support bought meeting supplies, such as flip charts, programs, flyers, and technology support, *Poll Everywhere*, used to gather data at the public dialogue, and to support speakers' fees.

Students are not paid to attend trainings or facilitate public events.

With an eye toward sustainability and research, we seek faculty infrastructure support in the near future. Presently, faculty time for stakeholder outreach, program design, student training, and research are not funded. The total expenditures for 2018-9 were \$11,000.



"Pop" Lacey was one of 17 students who earned their leadership pin for 25 or more volunteer hours of training and facilitation

Thank You Partners and Supporters

Responsible Governance and Citizenship Project
and Professor Stephen Trzaskoma
Brodeur Partners
and Andrea Coville & John Brodeur

and

Office of Community Equity and Diversity & Monica Chiu; Sustainability Institute Faculty & Staff; College of Liberal Arts (COLA) Dean Dillon, COLA Associate Dean Brett Gibson, COLA Associate Dean Reginald Wilburn; Professor Sheila McNamee, Professor Jack Lannamann; UNH Art Museum Director Kristina Durocher & Sara Zela; NH Listens, Treat & Michele Holt-Shannon; *Immigration Series*: Professor Lucy Saylor & Strawberry Banke Museum, 3S Artspace, Discover Portsmouth, Friends Forever, Portsmouth Public Library, ChildVoice, UNH Center for the Humanities, Southern NH Services Portsmouth Adult Education Program; *Deconstructing Conflict: Israel & Palestine*: Professor Cesar Rebellon, Professor Fredrik Meiton, Jordyn Haime, Nooran Alhamdan, Kevin Sousa; *Engaging Stigma*: Professor Thomas Jackson, Sidore Lecture Series Professors Mardi Kidwell, Edward Reynolds, & Michele Gibbons, Professor Elizabeth Caldwell, Pedro Altagracia & Jess Wojinski ('15) New Futures, John Burns; Teagle Planning Committee: Professor Nicoletta Gullace & Amy Oliva; Judy Sharkey; Paula Salvio

CDL Faculty & Staff

Jennifer Borda, Co-Director
Sam Davison, Spring Fellow
Eva Ford, Fall Fellow
Shannon Hagerty, Fall/Spring Fellow
Renee Heath, Co-Director
Carly Jilson, Spring Assistant Program Director & Intern
Caitlin Magowan, Fall/Spring Fellow
Kathleen Simoneau, Administrative Assistant
Jocelyn Vierzen, Fall Assistant Program Director

This report was written by Renee Heath with Jennifer Borda and Carly Jilson, June 2019

Email: Civil.Discourse@unh.edu
Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/UNHCivilDiscourse>