MSU DIALOGUES
A brief review of program data
Spring 2018

Prepared by Dr. Donna Rich Kaplowitz
Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives

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ABSTRACT

During spring term 2018, MSU's Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives launched a new initiative called MSU Dialogues. We trained 16 facilitators to facilitate 6 race dialogues for an 8-week, 90-minute per session experience. Dialogues consisted of between 6 and 16 participants and approximately 80 MSU graduate and undergraduate students participated. Approximately 54% of the participants identified as of color and 46% identified as white. Our goals were to tri-fold: increase personal identity awareness, improve understanding across racial identities, and strengthen individual and group capacity to create social change. To assess whether our program achieved its goals, we used a mixed-method approach with both a quantitative component (Qualtrics retrospective pre/post survey with 86% response rate) and a qualitative component (focus groups with a 30% response rate). In every area that we have empirically tested, respondents showed a statistically significant positive change from their pre-dialogue measures to their post-dialogue measures.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND ON DIALOGUE

Intergroup dialogue is an evidence-based set of practices that have been used and continuously improved for more than three decades to address social justice issues in educational and community settings. It is currently practiced in a variety of formats on more than one hundred college campuses. (Adams, 2007; Maxwell et. al., 2011; Zúñiga et. al., 2007).

Intergroup dialogue traditionally brings together members of two or more social identity groups for a sustained period of time in a series of carefully facilitated conversations about various social identities. Intergroup dialogue participants also engage in activities designed to help participants deepen their understanding of their own identity, understand one another's experiences, and ultimately take action to bridge differences. (Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011; Zúñiga et al., 2007)

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Intergroup dialogue has been found to be effective in various university contexts. For example, a nine-university study conducted over a multi-year period ending in 2013 found that dialogue participants increased their understanding of race, gender and income inequality, increased intergroup empathy, and increased their motivation to connect to members of other identity groups, when compared to a control group. (Gurin, Nagda & Zúñiga 2013).

MSU DIALOGUES

Michigan State University (MSU) Dialogues launched in Spring 2018 as a project of the MSU Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives. In its pilot phase, MSU Dialogues has shown tremendous promise in addressing some entrenched cultural issues on MSU's campus. MSU Dialogues helped participants develop a stronger sense of belonging on the MSU campus through the development of venues for dialogues across diverse participants and building and an inclusive community.

Participants in the MSU Dialogues pilot phase included 80 graduate and undergraduate students evenly divided between people who identified as white and those who identified as of color. Nearly every college at the university had representation among the participants. (See appendix for more information on departments and college representation). We also had religious, sexual, and nationality diversity. The only area we lacked diversity was in gender where 71% of the participants identified as female. There were six dialogue groups that met weekly for 90 minutes over an 8-week period. Every dialogue was facilitated by two facilitators, one a white person and one a person of color. Several dialogues also had "assistant facilitators" assigned to them to provide support and develop facilitation skills. Dialogues had between 8 and 16 participants, which were originally designed to reflect an equal representation of white participants and participants of color.

A total of 16 students went through a 20-hour training program in dialogue facilitation in order to prepare them to be facilitators for MSU Dialogues. Facilitators were paid a $500 stipend for their participation, and assistant facilitators were paid a $200 stipend. Both facilitators and assistant facilitators were paid at the end of the program.

The program was conceived and directed by Dr. Donna Rich Kaplowitz (Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives and Teacher Education) with graduate student assistance from Nicole Springer (Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement and Higher Adult and Lifelong Education, College of Education).

As part of MSU Dialogues, data were collected from participants as well as facilitators regarding their dialogue experience. This report shares some of our initial findings based a pre/post survey of dialogue participants and facilitators (n=69, response rate=86%) and three focus groups (total of 19 'participants' and 7 'facilitators'). The results demonstrate that the first foray into MSU campus-based dialogues has been successful. The initial data analysis presented below indicates an impressive, positive impact of the dialogue experience across the program's three principle goals: (1) Increase personal awareness

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about privilege and oppression; (2) Improve intergroup understanding and build relationships across difference; and (3) Explore ways of working together and strengthen capacity to create social change. **In every area that we have empirically tested, respondents showed a statistically significant positive change from their pre-dialogue measures to their post-dialogue measures.**

Sample Outcome Goal One
To measure our first goal, "increase personal awareness about privilege and oppression," one of the items we asked participants to respond to was the statement, "I understand systems of privilege and oppression." Twenty-seven percent of respondents indicated they "strongly agreed" with the statement *prior* to participating in MSU Dialogues, while 65% of respondents "strongly agreed" *after* participating in MSU Dialogues.

Sample Outcome Goal Two
One way we measured our efficacy in achieving our second goal of improving intergroup understanding, was to ask participants to respond to the statement, "I listen actively to others." *Prior* to participating in dialogue, 35% of respondents "strongly agreed" with this statement as compared to 89% of respondents *after* participating in dialogue.

Sample Outcome Goal Three
We asked our respondents ten questions to measure our third goal of exploring ways to work together toward greater equity and justice. One statement they were asked to respond was: "I have developed concrete strategies to work toward greater justice. *Prior* to MSU Dialogues, 9% of respondents "strongly agreed" with this statement, while after dialogues 46% of respondents strongly agreed. Similarly, another item said, "I intervene when I hear or see bias." We saw significant changes from before MSU Dialogues to after MSU Dialogues. Prior to MSU Dialogues, 7% of the respondents "strongly agreed" with this statement, and after MSU Dialogues, 49% reported they strongly agreed with this statement.

We explore the results in greater detail below.

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RESEARCH METHODS
We used a mixed-method approach to collect data and assess outcomes of the dialogue experience for participants and facilitators who took part in the MSU Dialogues pilot project. We developed and implemented a survey instrument as well as conducted a series of focus groups. The research methods for this project were reviewed and approved by the MSU Human Research Protect Program before any data were collected {MSU IRB # 17-1622}. The project was found to be exempt by IRB.

Specifically, we designed and implemented a survey instrument to collect information from dialogue participants using a retrospective pre-then-post survey format. With support from Dr. Laurie Van Egren, Assistant Provost for University-Community Partnerships in the

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Office of University Outreach and Engagement at Michigan State University, we developed the survey for online administration using Qualtrics. The survey consisted of 45 questions focusing on participant/facilitator experience. Of the 45 questions, there were 15 open-ended questions which were subsequently coded by a specially-trained undergraduate research assistant. All 80 dialogue participants and facilitators were invited to take the survey at the end of their dialogue experience. The survey was administered April 9-30, 2018. In the end, 86% of the dialogue members (69 of 80) completed the survey.

We also invited dialogue participants and facilitators to attend one of three focus groups to allow us to dive more deeply into participant and facilitator experiences in MSU Dialogues. The focus group members were organized so that there were two dialogue participant groups (one with 10 and the other with 9 participants) and one dialogue facilitator group (7 facilitators).The focus groups were designed to follow a discussion guide that focused on four categories of interest, among other things: (1) learning outcomes; (2) impacts, if any, on participants; (3) possible improvement/revision of the program; and (4) final thoughts and feedback that may not have been covered during the sessions. The focus groups were held in MSU Mosaic Center and were conducted by Dr. Michael Kaplowitz (Department of Community Sustainability [CSUS], College of Agriculture and Natural Resources). Dr. Michael Kaplowitz is a trained focus group facilitator who has published focus group-based research in peer-reviewed journals. Dr. Aaron McKim (CSUS) also collaborated on the focus group discussion guide.

The dialogue participants and facilitators who took part in the focus groups were given informed consent forms to review together with a $20 honorarium before the sessions began. After the participants signed the informed consent forms, the focus groups began. Dialogue participants and facilitators taking part in the focus groups were also given food (pizza) and drink during the sessions.

What follows below is a detailed review of some significant findings based on the surveys and focus groups. Though the discussion below does not present every question we measured, the data set shows that in every question tested in our Qualtrics retrospective pre/post survey, respondents showed statistically significant growth as a result of participation in dialogues.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS
QUALTRICS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The preliminary analyses of the MSU Dialogues data from the Spring 2018 pilot program are organized and presented by the project's three principle goals: (1) Increasing personal awareness about privilege and oppression; (2) Improving intergroup understanding and building relationships across difference; and (3) Exploring ways of working together and strengthen capacity to create social change.

These preliminary results are meant to shed light on possible program impacts on MSU Dialogues participants and facilitators. The initial data analyses reveal that for almost all of

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the preliminary findings presented below that the observed impacts appear to be of the same magnitude and significance for both MSU Dialogues *participants* and *facilitators*. Therefore, for the sake of brevity, only the results of the pooled data (i.e., both participants and facilitators) will be presented.

As mentioned above, the project developed and implemented an evaluation survey instrument based on previous studies to test whether the intervention (MSU Dialogues program) was impactful. (Gurin, Nagda and Zúñiga; Sustained Dialogue Institute, DC.; Northwestern University). The survey instrument asked respondents a series of questions using a retrospective pre- and post-format. The four-point response categories for those items are: 1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= agree; 4=strongly agree. For this report, we report statistical significance (or lack thereof) for differences in the means of respondents' "pre" and "post" data using paired samples t-tests with confidence intervals at 95%. All the reported mean differences were significant at the 99% level. Additionally, focus groups were conducted with dialogue participants and facilitators to further understand program impacts and effectiveness.

A representative sample of respondents' general comments in the open-ended survey questions indicate how participating in dialogue impacted participants follow:

> *"[Dialogue] changed my life."*

> *"The dialogues provided a very unique opportunity for folks to discuss race outside of the confines of academic spaces. We joined together as people invested in understanding race, not just as students and/or scholars."*

> *"The dialogues are an extraordinary space that should become ordinary for sharing the human experience, especially about race."*

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Goal 1: Increase personal awareness, raise consciousness about privilege and oppression.

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The first overarching goal of MSU Dialogues was to increase personal awareness and raise consciousness about privilege and oppression for participants and facilitators. We see from the results that follow that there was significant growth in personal awareness, awareness of privilege, and openness to learn about oppression.

I am aware of my identities
Mean pre=3.3; post = 3.7

In response to an item that asked respondents if they were aware of their identities before participating in MSU Dialogues, 34% of respondents indicated that they "strongly agreed" with the statement. In contrast, more than double the respondents (70%) indicated their strong agreement to that item after participating in MSU Dialogues.
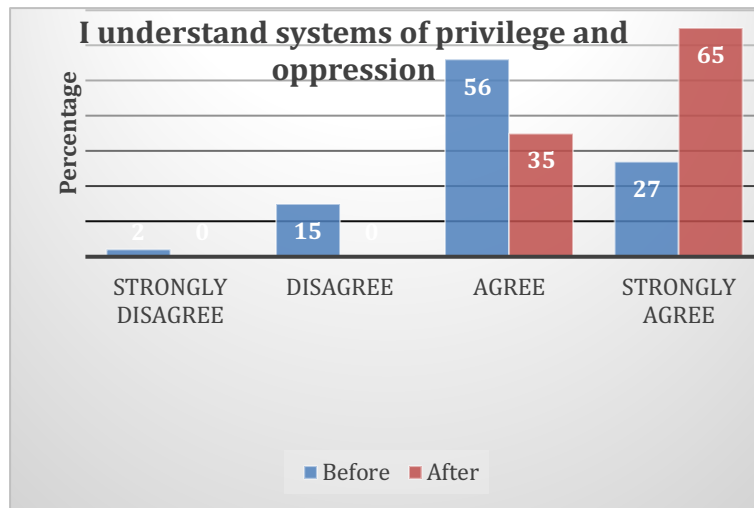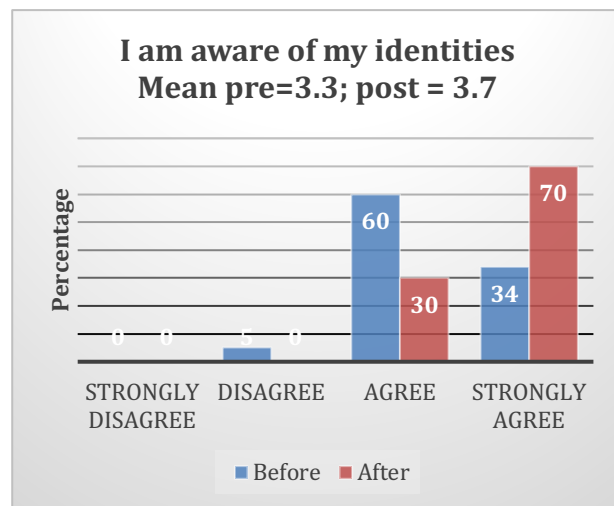
The item mean moved from 3.29 (before) to 3.7 (after) on the four-point scale. A statistically-significant difference at the 99% level.

One example of a respondent comment on the open-ended Qualtrics survey related to their growing self-awareness includes:

> "*This was a transformative, self-reflective experience that helped me develop a greater sensitivity to the oppression that others may face due to their social identities.*"

The focus group discussions underscored the value of dialogue as effective at increasing participants/facilitators awareness of their identities. As one participant reported, "*I am more aware of my identities as a result of participating in dialogue.*" [FG 1] Another participant said, "*I'm more conscious of race.*" [FG 1]

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I understand systems of privilege and oppression

Percentage

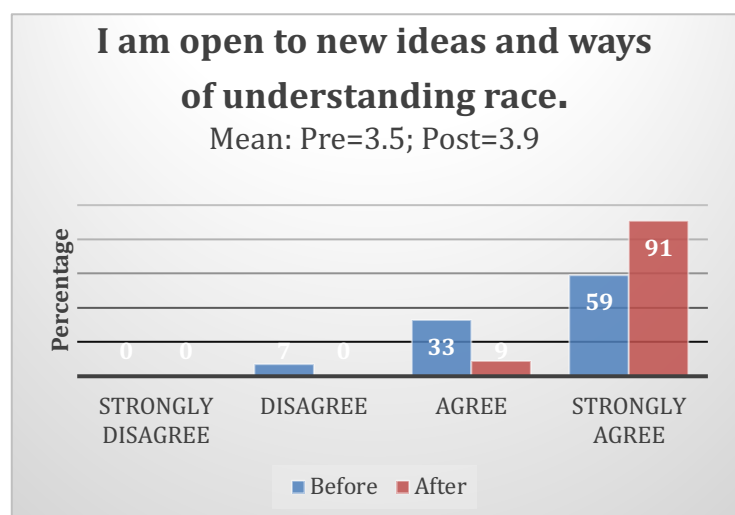|	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Before	2	15	56	27
After	0	0	35	65

■ Before ■ After

To measure participants' and facilitators' understanding of systems of privilege and oppression, they were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "I understand systems of privilege and oppression." We see that 27% of respondents indicated that they "strongly agree" that they understand systems of privilege and oppression in contrast to the 65% of respondents strongly agree with that statement after participating in dialogues.

The item mean of the responses to this question changed from 3.06 (before dialogues) to 3.67 (after dialogues) on the four-point scale. This difference is statistically significant at the 99% level.

An open-ended comment from the Qualtrics survey shows how students perceive their growth in understanding systems of privilege and oppression: "*I realized how little interaction I really have with people who are different from me. At the same time, I learned a lot about people who are different than me. I also feel I am better able to discuss systems of privilege and oppression.*"

One focus group participant said, "*So, I'd say I think from the weeks I've spent, I'd say I just tend to think about difference in people more. Not necessarily just for race, but just kind of understanding that everyone has their own differences. I think that's probably how I've been changed the most.*" [FG 1]
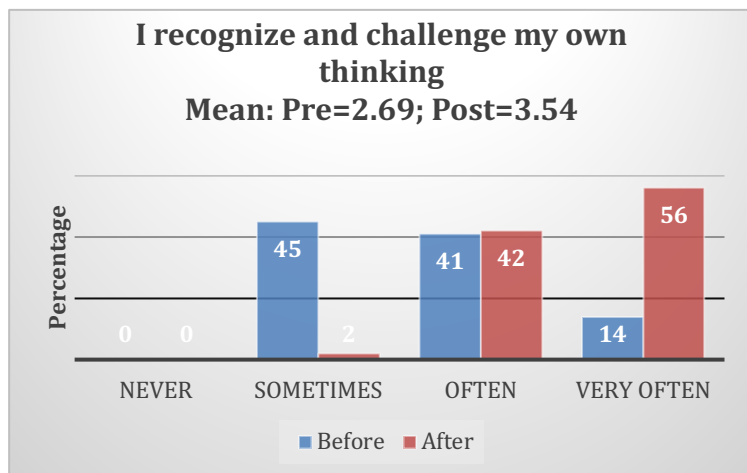
To further explore how participants and facilitators may have been impacted by the MSU Dialogues experience, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the statement, "I am open to new ideas and ways of understanding race." Prior to the MSU Dialogues, 59% of respondents indicated they "strongly agreed" with the statement. After the Dialogues, significantly more respondents

I am open to new ideas and ways of understanding race.

Mean: Pre=3.5; Post=3.9

Percentage

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Before	0	7	33	59
After	0	0	9	91

■ Before ■ After

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(94%) "strongly agree" with that same statement.

The mean of the 'before-Dialogue' responses for this item was 3.5, while the mean for the 'post-Dialogue' responses for this item was 3.9, a significant difference at the 99% level.

As one focus group participant noted, *"I really appreciate perspectives of people in my group that I don't have."* [FG2] Another focus group participant reported that they "felt '*more aware*' of race." [FG1]

I recognize and challenge my own thinking
Mean: Pre=2.69; Post=3.54

To further explore the question of whether MSU Dialogues participants and facilitators changed their consciousness about race issues, we asked them to indicate the frequency that they "recognize and challenge my own thinking." Responses of "very often" for this item from respondents prior to the MSU Dialogues were 14 percent. In contrast, 56 percent of respondents indicated that they recognized and challenged their own thinking "very often" after the Dialogues.
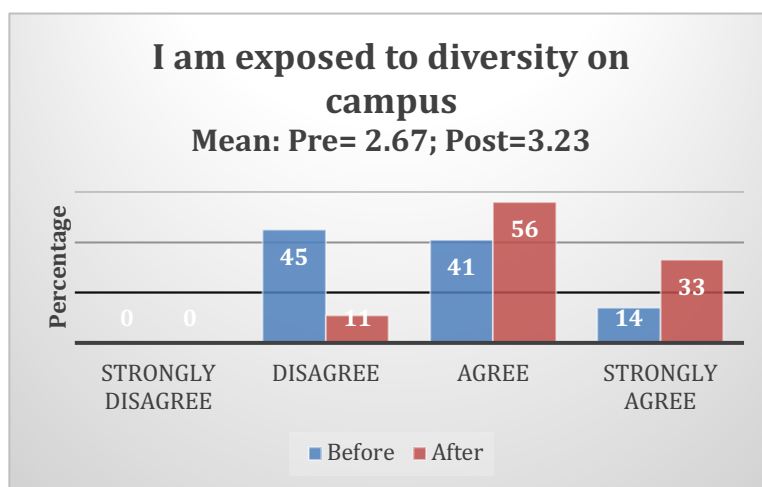
The mean for this item changed from 2.69 on a 4-point scale (before MSU Dialogues) to 3.54 (after MSU Dialogues), a statistically-significant difference at the 99% level.

During the focus group sessions, one participant explained the change in their thinking as a result of the MSU Dialogues as follows, *"I had many moments where I heard and learned things that I had never heard or learned in previous spaces."* [FG2]

One representative example from the Qualtrics survey that indicated students learned to challenge their own thinking was: "*[Dialogue] changes your perspective; increases ability to shift perspectives and increases empathy*."

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GOAL 2: Improve intergroup understanding, build relationships across difference through storytelling and generous/empathetic listening.

The second goal of MSU Dialogues was to improve intergroup understanding and build relationships across difference. To measure if the MSU Dialogues pilot project impacted participants' and facilitators' intergroup understanding and relationships across difference, respondents were asked rate their level of agreement to a series of items using retrospective pre- and post-measures for the following three questions.

I am exposed to diversity on campus
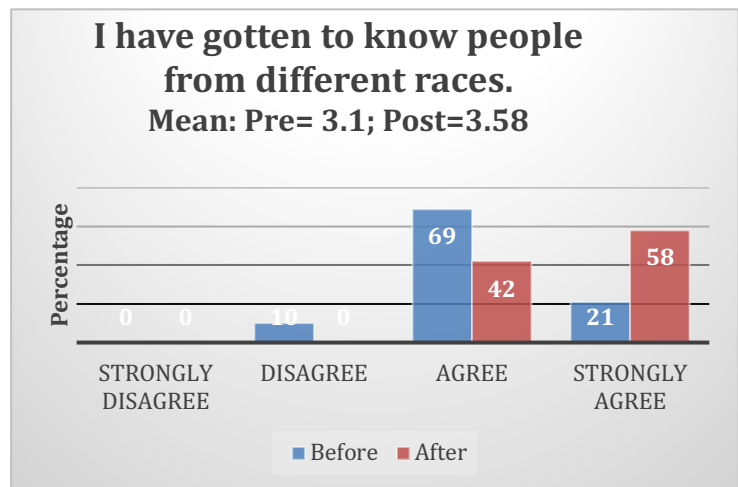**Mean: Pre= 2.67; Post=3.23**

When asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement, "I am exposed to diversity on campus," 14% of respondents indicated that they "strongly agreed" that they are exposed to diversity on campus prior to MSU Dialogues. In contrast, 33% of respondents indicated that they "strongly agreed" with the statement after their participation in Dialogue.

This item's mean response changed from 2.67 (pre-dialogue) to 3.23 (post-dialogue), a significant difference at the 99% level.

During the focus group sessions, one focus group participant reported that,
> "[They] *don't get to have these conversations a lot.* [FG 2]

Another focus group participant explained that,
> [MSU Dialogues] *was so impactful. The first thing I thought of was" hope" because I feel like when people talk about diversity on campus, there's not a lot of requirements and stuff. So this program is definitely a sense of hope in terms of the university doing something.* [FG 3]

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To examine if MSU Dialogues participants and facilitators were meeting people of different races on campus, and to examine whether dialogue experience impacted them in this area, respondents were asked about their agreement to the statement, "I have gotten to know people from different races." Twenty-one percent of respondents reported that before MSU Dialogues they "strongly agreed" that they got to know people from different races while 58% of respondents indicated

I have gotten to know people from different races.
Mean: Pre= 3.1; Post=3.58

that they "strongly agreed" with this statement *after* participating in dialogues. The mean for this item was 3.1 for before MSU Dialogues and 3.6 for after MSU Dialogues, a statistically significant difference at the 99% level.

A representative example of a respondent comment from the Qualtrics survey concerning getting to know people from different races follows:

"The dialogues provided a very unique opportunity for folks to discuss race outside of the confines of academic spaces. We joined together as people invested in understanding race, not just as students and/or scholars."

I listen actively to others
Mean: Pre=3.1; Post= 3.89
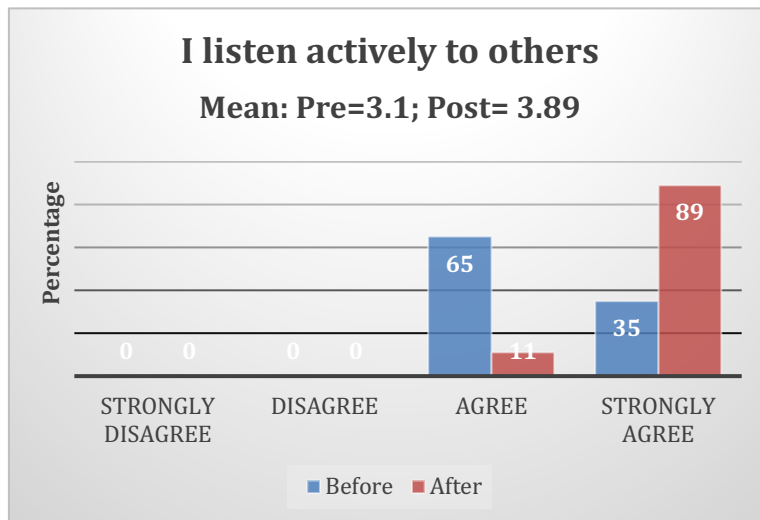
Intergroup dialogue teaches participants and facilitators to learn how to listen actively and generously, especially to people who are different from them. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "I listen actively to other." Thirty-five (35) percent of respondents answered that prior to participating in dialogue they strongly agreed with the statement as compared to 89% of respondents who reported they strongly agreed with the statement after the MSU Dialogues. The mean response for this item changed from 3.1 on a 4-point scale for 'before MSU Dialogues' to 3.89 on the same scale for 'after MSU Dialogues,' a statistically significant difference at the 99% level.

Representative comments from the Qualtrics survey indicate that participants believed that they learned to listen:

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"By actively listening to people whose ideas are very different than mine, putting my own judgments aside, and taking others' perspectives, I was able to harness more patience in listening to views that I find problematic. I learned to pause and ask clarifying questions."

"For me, active listening was most meaningful. Before intercultural dialogues, I would just get frustrated with people when they made racist or discriminatory comments. Now, I am thinking about ways (using the tools provided by my facilitators) to challenge people in their thinking in a productive way. I don't want to shut people down for what they say, but rather challenge them to think in a different way."

As one of the focus group participants put it,
[MSU Dialogues] *helped me speak up more – avoid debate, and engage in conversations."* [FG 1]

MSU Dialogues Goal # 3:
Explore ways of working together toward greater equity and justice. Strengthen capacity to create social change.

A third major goal of the pilot project of MSU Dialogues was exploring if the dialogue process helped participants work collaboratively toward greater equity and justice. This goal also included determining whether MSU Dialogues impacted participants' individual capacity to create social change. Recipients of the evaluation survey were asked a series of ten questions to measure their level of agreement with items related to working together towards social justice and social change using a 1-4 point scale -- 1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3= agree; 4=strongly agree. For the sake of brevity, we report results for five of the ten items in the retrospective pre-/post-dialogue items under this goal's theme.

Importantly, all ten items under this theme evidenced statistically significant changes in the same direction and to similar extents.

Before MSU Dialogues, 52% of respondents said they **agreed** (43%) or **strongly agreed** (9%) with the statement, "I have developed concrete strategies to work toward greater equity and justice." After dialogues, 92% of the respondents reported they agreed (46%) or strongly agreed (46%) with the statement.
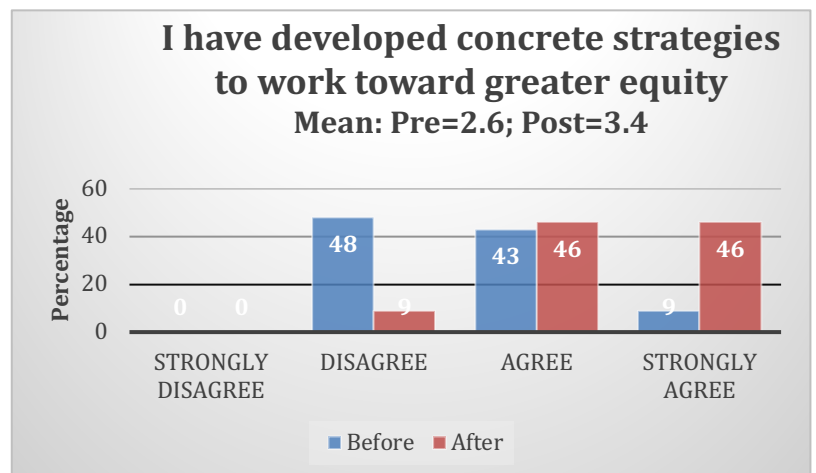
I have developed concrete strategies to work toward greater equity
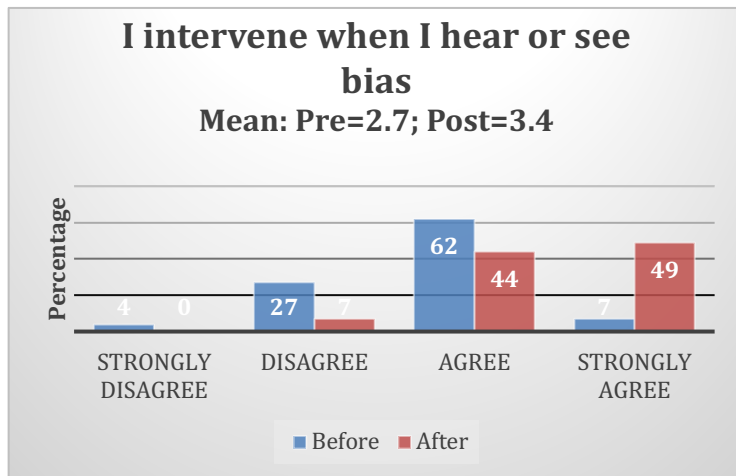**Mean: Pre=2.6; Post=3.4**

The mean response to this item changed from 2.6 prior to participating in dialogue to 3.4 after dialogue on a four-point scale, a statistically significant difference at the 99% level.

During the focus groups, a number of students explained concrete strategies they developed from dialogues to work toward greater equity:

One focus group participant remarked, "*I'm going to be an RA next year. So I think I'm really going to be able to use those skills that I learned and apply them to having difficult conversations with my residents*. [FG 2]

Another focus group participant made the point that, "*I wasn't getting [social justice] in my first semester of my master's program. There wasn't a lot of space to involved with that in my program, so I just kind of felt myself pulling away from it even though it's personally what I'm passionate about, so dialogue brought it back to the forefront for me*." (FG 3)

Another focus group participant shared that, "*I work in a very conservative field under the Trump Administration in the UP [Upper Peninsula] and so the ability to listen to people with different ideas, I think is gonna help me*." [FG 1]

I intervene when I hear or see bias
Mean: Pre=2.7; Post=3.4

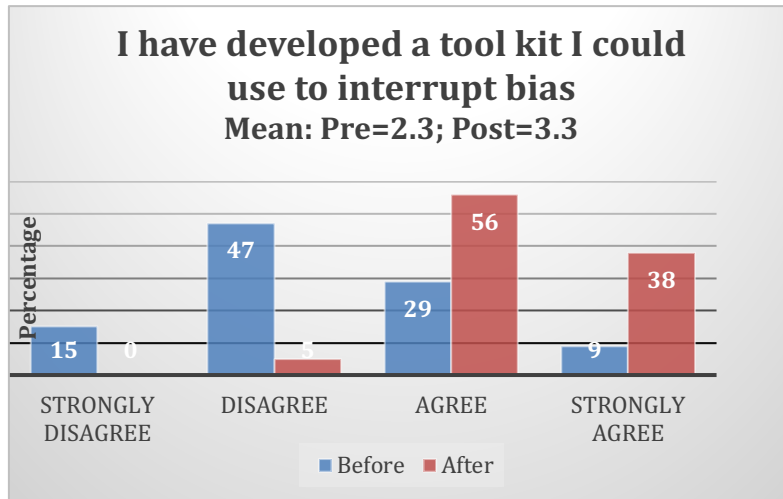|	Before	After
STRONGLY DISAGREE	4	0
DISAGREE	27	7
AGREE	62	44
STRONGLY AGREE	7	49

The item that said, "I intervene when I hear or see bias," evidenced significant changes from before MSU Dialogues to after MSU Dialogues. Before dialogues, 7% of the respondents said they "strongly agree" and 62% said they "agree" that they intervened when they see or hear bias (69% combined). After dialogues, 49% reported that they "strongly agree" and 44% reported they "agree" that they intervene when they hear or see bias. (93% combined).

The mean for this item changed from 2.7 prior to participating in MSU Dialogues to 3.4 after MSU Dialogues on a four-point scale. This was a statistically significant difference at the 99% level.

During the focus group discussions, a student noted that, "*In fighting racial discrimination and inequality I never knew how I could participate and be effective. I think that was something I came away with that was very valuable*." [FG 2]

Representative examples from the Qualtrics survey open ended questions include:
"*I have gained communication skills that allow me to talk about hard topics and interrupt bias as I hear it.*"

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"I think the most important thing I gained from dialogues was the ability to listen to others who share different experiences from me in a constructive and understanding way. I also learned how to express my rage with racial inequality and injustice in a more productive way."

I have developed a tool kit I could use to interrupt bias
Mean: Pre=2.3; Post=3.3

Before MSU Dialogues 9% of respondents "strongly agree" and 29% of them "agree" with the statement, "I have a tool kit I could use to interrupt bias." (Combined 38%) After MSU Dialogues, 38% of respondents said they "strongly agree" and 56% of respondents "agree" that they have a tool kit to interrupt bias. (94% combined). Conversely, more than half of the responde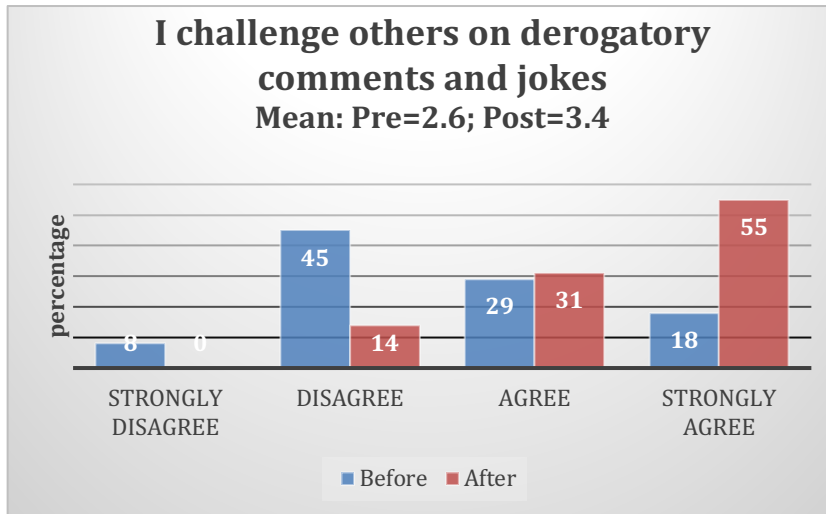nts (62%) reported they did not have a tool kit to interrupt bias before MSU Dialogues, while only 5% reported they did not have a tool kit after dialogues.

The mean for this item changed from 2.3 prior to participating in dialogue to 3.3 after MSU Dialogues on a four-point scale, a statistically significant difference at the 99% level.

One representative response in the Qualtrics survey noted: "[Dialogue] *is helpful for the classroom, professional world and personal relationships. I can see this being beneficial for me years down the line in marriage or working with a colleague who I disagree with.*"

This was also confirmed in our focus groups. Students repeatedly referred to the specific practice of PALS (Pause, Ask, Listen, Share your story) that was introduced in MSU Dialogues as a key new tool in responding to bias.

As one focus group participant put it: *"[PALS] is very helpful. I think what it does is it just defuses the hot, immediate reaction that you have when somebody says something incendiary. PALS sort of helps you calm yourself down, count to ten, before you say something that you might regret and might not be productive."* [FG 2]

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I challenge others on derogatory comments and jokes
Mean: Pre=2.6; Post=3.4

	Before	After
STRONGLY DISAGREE	8	0
DISAGREE	45	14
AGREE	29	31
STRONGLY AGREE	18	55

We asked participants about their ability/practice of challenging others' derogatory comments/jokes. Prior to dialogue, 18% of respondents "strongly agree" and 29% agree that they challenge others on derogatory comments and jokes (47% combined).
After dialogue, 55% of respondents said they "strong agree" and 31% "agree" that they challenge others on derogatory comments and jokes (86% combined).
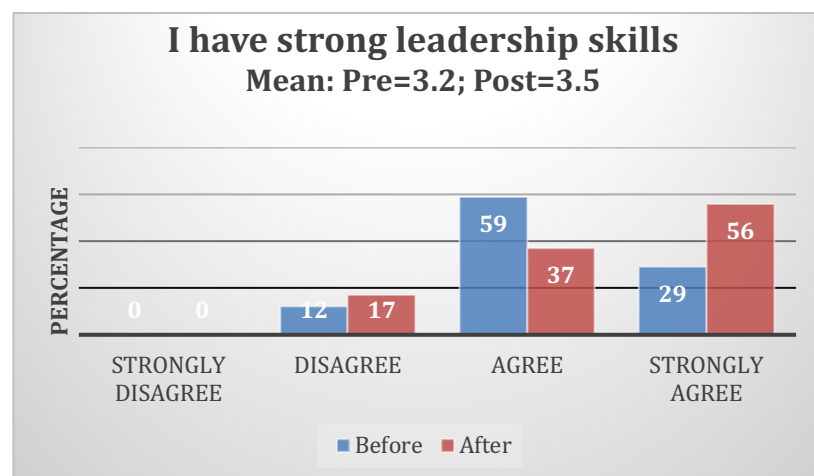
The mean response to this item changed from 2.6 prior to participating in dialogue to 3.4 after dialogue on a four-point scale, a statistically significant difference at the 99% level.

In the focus groups, one participant told us that, "*I'm not a very talkative person, especially with race. But that's counteractive to what I want in the world. If you want to see change, you have to be the change. I have to step out and engage in these conversations even they are uncomfortable to me.*" [FG2]

Another focus group participant shared with us that, "*In fighting racial discrimination and inequality I never knew how I could participate and be effective. I think that was something I came away with that was very valuable.*" [FG2]

I have strong leadership skills
Mean: Pre=3.2; Post=3.5

	Before	After
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0
DISAGREE	12	17
AGREE	59	37
STRONGLY AGREE	29	56

To examine whether participants perceived a growth in leadership skills after participating in dialogue, we asked respondents to rate their agreement with the statement, "I have strong leadership skills." Twenty-nine (29%) of respondents "strongly agree" and 59% of respondents said they agree with the statement.
After MSU Dialogues, 56% of respondents reported they "strongly agreed" and 37 percent of respondents agree that that they have strong leadership skills.

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The mean for this item changed from 3.17 prior to participating in dialogue to 3.49 after dialogue on a four-point scale, a statistically significant difference at the 99% level.

During our focus groups, one participant noted, "*I think it is so great that this space existed ... because I don't know where else this space is on campus. I think my reason for participating is because I felt like it was a skill set I need and I didn't have and I didn't know where else to get it, right?*" [FG 1]

Another focus group member put it this way, "[*MSU Dialogues] are useful in my future career advising international [African] students about study in the US.*" [FG 3] One facilitator said that the experience "*affirmed I knew I knew what I was doing and that there's still hope.*" [FG 3]

Additional Feedback

The reported results as well as other feedback received from MSU Dialogues participants and facilitators support the conclusion that the relatively low-cost 8-week program made positive impacts on both MSU Dialogues participants and facilitators. Moreover, the feedback and experience from the pilot project provided valuable lessons for refining and developing the program at Michigan State University. Some of the insights from the Qualtrics survey and focus groups are shared below.

TIME & DIALOGUE STRUCTURE
When participants and facilitators were asked for recommendations about the program moving forward and ways to improve it, the most frequent and most immediate concerns that were raised centered on the quantity of dialogue material and the lack of sufficient time. Nearly every dialogue group, it turns out, used all of the allotted meeting time each week (90 minutes) prior to finishing the weekly curriculum. Facilitators often reported having to make trade-offs between subject matter, materials, and dialogue exercises.

To address this time-crunch problem, participants were asked if they would be willing to participate in two-hour sessions as opposed to the current 90-minute sessions. Interestingly, undergraduate participants were nearly unanimous in their agreement that they would be interested in longer meeting times, while most graduate students were clear that they would *not* commit more than 90 minutes per week. One undergraduate reported in a focus group: "[*I want] longer sessions. I don't want homework! Make sessions 2 hours.*" [FG 3]. Another undergraduate said, "*I mean, we could have used twice as much time to really grapple with what we were encountering. So I think time would probably be a big plus.*" [FG 2]. A graduate student, however, indicated, "Keep it at 90 minutes but run it a few more weeks." [FG 2]. Another graduate student said, "*I'm not interested in two-hour sessions.*" [FG 2]

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Additionally, the feedback provided by many of the graduate students indicated a preference for a program structure in which participants reviewed material and did assignments in advance of each meeting. This, according to some of the graduate students, might enable more meeting time to be used for engaging in and practicing dialogic skills. Such an approach would be a change from the current model by reducing the current use of meeting time for presenting and developing content knowledge. As one graduate student focus group participant put it, there is value in considering "*flipping the class*" for graduate students who do more "homework" and come prepared to weekly sessions ready for dialogue. [FG 2]

Interestingly, the undergraduate students did not share the same view regarding 'homework' and reading material before the weekly meetings. Some were reluctant to commit to spending time outside of dialogue to read in advance of the dialogue sessions. One facilitator noted: "*We need to differentiate grad and undergrad dialogues. Grads need material up front and more discussion, undergrads need an extra 30 minutes.*" [FG 3]

Therefore, moving forward, we are considering differentiated programs based on group membership. Undergraduate programs may be structured to last 2 hours, while graduate programs could continue to meet for 90 minutes with the expectation that advance work be done prior to dialogue sessions.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

When asked about what they liked best about the MSU Dialogues, the most frequent and common response from both undergraduate and graduate students was learning about how to respond to biased comments. Among other strategies, MSU Dialogues taught a PALS (Pause, Ask, Listen, Share) strategy. Respondents uniformly reported that they found PALS useful and that they had success using PALS during the semester. In some cases, respondents reported wishing that PALS had come earlier in the dialogue session. As one respondent put it,

> *I really wish that PALS would have been pounded more because I feel like that is what I went to the dialogues for was to learn those skills like PALS.* [FG 1]

Other respondents shared suggestions about how to practice PALS more authentically including assigning it as homework to be practiced in the "real world," or partnering with another dialogue group and practicing PALS with people they did not know. [FG 2]. It is unambiguous that PALS is a highly valued component of the MSU Dialogues program.

Many respondents indicated they had a variety of tools to respond to biased comments including: learning to dialogue not debate. One respondent said: "*I can respond without being overly aggressive.*" [FG 1]; Another said, "*I feel like now, having those conversations, I have something to back up my argument, if you will.*" [FG 2]

The focus groups and open-ended survey responses also revealed a strong desire among both participants and facilitators for more tools and techniques to help the students counter or interrupt bias and oppressive comments and actions. It is clear from the feedback that though respondents appreciate and value PALS and the other tools we

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introduced, they would like additional tools and techniques for confronting prejudice, bias, and oppression. This can be an area of growth for the MSU Dialogues program.

FACILITATOR FEEDBACK
We were specifically interested in learning about the *facilitators'* reflections about their experience with MSU Dialogues. We had a 75% response rate to our Qualtrics survey among facilitators, slightly lower than the general participant response rate of 86% and we had a 44% participation rate among facilitators in the focus groups –higher than the general participant response rate of 30%. It is clear from the responses below that the facilitation experience had a profound and positive impact on facilitators.

Facilitation Skills
Facilitators were asked whether they thought they would be able to use their facilitation skills in the future. Ninety-one percent of the facilitators responded "yes" to this question. We asked facilitators to share skills they thought they gained from being trained in facilitating dialogue and sample responses included: listening skills, team work, patience, public speaking skills, confidence, "*the ability to teach others how to talk about differences,*" and several facilitators specifically mentioned "PALS."

Some of the longer open-ended responses to this question included:

> *Absolutely! The skills I have learned through dialogue are so transferable to both my work and my personal life. I have learned how to handle conflict in calming ways, how to have productive and calm conversations with people who hold different beliefs than I do, and just group leadership and management skills in general that I think will be very applicable in any workforce.*

> *I'll use these skills in every aspect of my life, from relationships to teaching. This has taught me to value pause and careful consideration of what I say. It makes a huge difference.*

> *This will greatly improve my interpersonal relationship especially with people from different cultural and racial background. It would enable me to be a better ally to oppressed groups as well as help me to identify and win allies for the group to which I belong. It will improve my communication and conflict mitigation skills as well to help people work around differences.*

> *As a graduate teaching assistant, as a friend, and as a partner, I will turn to dialogue skills to help navigate how best to communicate difficult subjects.*

> *Useful in my future career advising international (African) students about study in the U.S.*

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Facilitation Training
We wondered how facilitators perceived the facilitator training we provided them and we asked, "Do you think your facilitation training was adequate?" Seventy-five percent (n=9) of facilitator respondents indicated yes and 25% (N=3) indicated they did not.

When we asked facilitators to explain how the facilitator training could be improved responses varied. Several facilitators commented on the length of the training, though they disagreed with one another on whether to lengthen or shorten the training. One respondent requested an 8-hour training (our training is currently 20 hours) and another said we should have *more* training days.

In terms of facilitation training content, some facilitators indicated they wanted more opportunity to practice facilitation during the training and less didactic teaching about terminology and identity content. One participant suggested that more expert research material be included in the training. This is an area for development and we are addressing these comments moving forward.

Facilitator Weekly Reflection Circles
There was unanimous agreement that the weekly facilitator reflection circles were useful. Two respondents indicated they thought we could meet every other week instead of every week. Because of timing constraints, we met on Sunday afternoons and despite losing part of the weekend, we had nearly perfect attendance at the facilitator reflection circles. Midway through the 8-week session, we deliberately changed the format of the reflection circles and had facilitators lead the discussion rather than the co-directors.

Of the open-ended responses to a question about the value of the weekly facilitator reflection circles, one representative response to this question was:

> *I loved that we got a chance to talk and reflect as facilitators with our counterparts who had similar experiences (because they were doing the same sessions) but also different experiences because everyone's group make-up was different. It was a great opportunity to learn from each other about what worked for them, what didn't work, or what they struggled with in their groups.*

Another respondent reported:

> *It was very helpful to gather together to discuss how other groups were doing and also tackle possible challenges as a group and to talk through the next lesson. In the future, I think it will be good for facilitator teams to lead the reflection, or part of the reflection.*

Co-Facilitation Experience
Facilitators were asked to respond to the question "Did you and your "co" work well together?" There was nearly unanimous positive response though one facilitator indicated "maybe."

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The open-ended response to this question was very revealing. Eighty-eight percent of the response were positive. Respondents indicated the following sentiments: *"Having a co-facilitator of color was so helpful." "We worked well in that we usually deferred to each other's strengths." "We were both on the same page." "My co was amazing and I really appreciated the opportunity to work together. "Well matched, we found ourselves to be very similar over time. We had a great balanced and flow to our planning and engagement." "I think my team and I worked well together."*

One focus group respondent said, *"I honestly appreciated my co facilitator. Because when I wouldn't say something, she would say something. And we just filled each other's blanks which was really helpful for me."*

The negative respondent indicated, *"I wanted to plan together more while my cos were more laid back."*

Greatest Challenge
We asked facilitators to share their greatest challenge in facilitation and responses ranged from *"realizing the long trajectory of racism in this country and abroad"* to *"managing group dynamics when things got a little tense."* One facilitator indicated they *"tend to want to reply and answer questions immediately"* but *"tried to be more patient and see if participants would step forward to share their insights … And many times they* did!" Another facilitator wrote that they were challenged *"recognizing that I still have blind-spots, getting corrected by my co-facilitator (in a very nice respectful way) but knowing that I still have room for improvement."* Two facilitators mentioned they struggled using the power points/scripts and wanted to be able to use their own language more authentically. Several also reflected on the challenge of time. One focus group member reported that *"time was an issue – we didn't want to leave anything out. Add a few weeks?"* Another focus group member said *"We were able to be strategic and cut out slides after we got to know our group."* This is an area of growth, and we are re-working the curriculum and power points to allow more flexibility for the facilitators.

Greatest Success
Facilitators named a number of "greatest successes." The largest number of responses (50%) centered on witnessing their participants grow. One respondent noted that they *"develop[ed] a communal space where some vulnerability began to happen and growth occurred gradually."* Another respondent wrote, *"I watched people grow and change, and that is a success and a joy to witness."* Still another facilitator wrote, *"The greatest success is seeing our participants actually model/use some of the tools we provided."*

Another sizeable success (one third) centered on *"cultivating friendships out of participants"* or *"bonding with participants."* One quarter of the facilitators also mentioned learning how to listen, summarize, and connect participant comments to both personal and larger societal issues.

The facilitator feedback in both the focus groups and the Qualtrics survey was valuable and is being used to adjust our program moving forward.

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ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS

Other comments from participants and facilitators during the focus groups touched on a range of suggestions and possible improvements for the MSU Dialogues program. Here are some examples (paraphrased) of those suggestions and insights:

- Most of my dialogue group was female-identified, so do a better job with outreach to achieve more gender-balance/diversity in the groups.
- Spend more time (or extra time) building a sense of community within each dialogue group including opportunities to socialize outside of the dialogue or starting each session with a check in about how things are going for individuals.
- Some dialogue groups developed their own opportunities to socialize by developing and using "group me" or Facebook pages or pizza parties or movie nights/game nights. When other participants learned of those activities, they remarked how they wished that they had had those opportunities.
- Several graduate student respondents indicated their preference for dialogue groups that did not include undergraduate students (one of the groups was mixed between graduate and undergraduate students).
- One respondent expressed concern about the number of people that dropped out of her MSU Dialogues group. At the same time, most of the MSU Dialogues groups did not experience any attrition.
- Some of the respondents, especially graduate students, asked for reference materials to "take home."
- There was almost universal positive response and feedback to the MSU Dialogues facilitators. Ninety-four percent of the participants indicated that they would "recommend" their facilitators for future dialogues. Six percent said they would recommend their facilitator with additional training. One example of the efficacy and value of the specially-trained MSU Dialogues facilitators was shared by a respondent as follows:

  > *I had an "aha" moment. It was with a facilitator and we had been talking about intervening when bias occurs, and she just asked me, 'why is that?' And as I was explaining it to her and it was coming out of my mouth, I suddenly saw what was wrong with my logic…. She kind of just continued to question me and asked me to explain why I had thought that. She helped me think things through.* [FG 2]

Next Steps

Moving forward, the MSU Dialogues program aims to build on the first phase of pilot programming. The MSU Dialogues leadership team has been able to hire a half-time graduate assistant with the support of two additional units on campus: The Department of

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Community Sustainability (CSUS) in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources CANR) and the HUB for Innovation in Learning and Technology. Additionally, the MSU Dialogues program will be working with a Student Affairs practicum student next semester (Fall 2018). Both the practicum student and the graduate research assistantship student are past facilitators with MSU Dialogues. Part of their task in the upcoming semester/academic year will be helping to address concerns raised (and discussed above) as well as modifying the MSU Dialogues curriculum prior to the start of the next implementation of MSU Dialogues. Additionally, we will be differentiating undergraduate and graduate curriculum. We also plan to introduce Dialogues 2.0 for returning participants who want to continue dialogic practice and extend their knowledge.

Additionally, we are partnering with the Center for Gender in a Global Context to create a new dialogue topic for Spring 2019 focusing on gender, and we are partnering with the Hub for Innovation to create a faculty dialogue scheduled to start in the fall of 2018. Additionally, we have been in discussion with MRULE to see how we can co-create and collaborate on programming to address MSU's continuing need for the development of civil discourse.

We believe that with growing name recognition, partnering with key units on campus, introducing dialogues as a co-curricular part of course work, and sharing our results, (like this report) we will be able to recruit a large group of students, faculty and staff who want to participate. We are also partnering with courses on campuses like TE250 and Women's Studies classes as well as AOP and the Honor's College to share information about our program more widely. Our vision is to expand MSU Dialogues in the coming years to meet a growing demand. Our funding sources remain limited at this time, so our program expansion will be tied to our ability to raise new funds to support additional administrators, facilitators and dialogue groups. Addressing funding issues will be an important area of focus as we move forward.

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Appendix A – Applicants by College at MSU:

College	Number of applicants
Eli Broad College of Business	7
College of Arts and Letters	16
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources	10
College of Communication Arts and Sciences	3
College of Natural Science	6
College of Music	2
College of Social Science	32
College of Education	32
College of Engineering	4
James Madison College	6
Law College	0
Lyman Briggs College	3
College of Nursing	1
Residential College in the Arts and Humanities	10
College of Osteopathic Medicine	0
College of Veterinary Medicine	0
College of Human Medicine	0
Lansing Community College	2

17% of applicants indicated they were international students.

List of majors/colleges – Applicants for 2018 dialogues

1. Business
2. Business
3. Business
4. Business
5. Business – Accounting
6. Business – Accounting
7. Business – Finance
8. CAL
9. CAL - English
10. CAL - English
11. CAL - German
12. CAL – African and African American Studies
13. CAL – English
14. CAL – English
15. CAL – English
16. CAL – German
17. CAL – German
18. CAL – Humanities pre-law
19. CAL – MFA
20. CAL – Rhetoric and Writing
21. CAL – Women's and Gender Studies
22. CAL- German Studies
23. CANR
24. CANR – CSUS
25. CANR – CSUS
26. CANR – Fisheries and Wildlife
27. CANR – Fisheries and wildlife
28. CANR – Forestry
29. CANR – Forestry
30. CANR – Forestry
31. CANR – Landscape Architecture
32. CANR- Forestry
33. CAS
34. CAS – Media and Info
35. CNS
36. CNS – Biochemistry and Molecular biology
37. CNS – Biology
38. CNS – Neuroscience
39. CNS – Neuroscience

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40. CNS – Neuroscience
41. College of Music – Jazz Studies
42. College of Music – Music Ed
43. COM – Health and ris communications
44. COM- Media and Info
45. Communications
46. CSS
47. CSS –
48. CSS – Anthropology
49. CSS – Geography
50. CSS – Geography
51. CSS – Geography
52. CSS – Geography
53. CSS – Global and International Studies
54. CSS – Human Development and Family Studies
55. CSS – Human Development and Family Studies
56. CSS – Human Development and Family Studies
57. CSS – Political Science
58. CSS – Psychology
59. CSS – Psychology
60. CSS – Psychology, Sociology
61. CSS – Social Work
62. CSS – Social Work
63. CSS – Social work
64. CSS – Sociology
65. CSS – Sociology
66. CSS – Women's and Gender Studies
67. CSS – Women's and Gender Studies
68. Ed
69. ED
70. ED
71. Ed –
72. Ed –
73. Ed – Admin
74. Ed – CITE
75. Ed – CITE
76. Ed – CITE
77. ED – Ed Admin.
78. Ed – Ed psych and Ed Tech
79. Ed – Elem ed
80. Ed – Elemen.
81. Ed – Elementary
82. Ed – Elementary Ed
83. Ed – K-12 Admin
84. Ed – Kineseology, sport psych
85. Ed – Kinesiology
86. Ed – Kinesiology
87. Ed – Kinesiology
88. ED – Kinesiology
89. Ed – Music ed
90. Ed – School Psych
91. Ed – School Psych
92. ED – secondary English
93. Ed – Student Affairs Admin
94. Ed – TE
95. Ed – TE
96. Ed – TE
97. Ed – TE
98. Ed – TE
99. ED – TE
100. Ed- Student Affairs
101. ENG – Chemical
102. ENG – Chemical Eng
103. ENG – Mechanical
104. ENG– No Pref
105. Human Capital and Society
106. Human Capital and Society
107. IDS
108. Interdisciplinary Studies
109. International Relations
110. JMC – Social Relations
111. JMC – Social Relations
112. JMC – Social Relations
113. JMC – Social Relations
114. JMC – Social Relations
115. JMC – Social relations and policy
116. Lyman Briggs
117. Lyman Briggs – Human Biology
118. Lyman Briggs – Physiology
119. MPP
120. Nursing
121. Public policy
122. RCAH
123. RCAH
124. RCAH
125. RCAH
126. RCAH
127. RCAH
128. RCAH
129. RCAH
130. RCAH
131. RCAH
132. RCAH
133. School of Criminal Justice
134. School of Planning Design and Construction
135. School of Social Work
136. Social Work
137. Social Work
138. Urban and Regional Planning
139. Urban and Regional Planning

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