

## A Word from our Executive Director, Adi Grabiner-Keinan

*In Note to Educators: Hope Required when Growing Roses in Concrete (2009), Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade reminds us that Audacious hope stares down the painful path; and despite the overwhelming odds against us making it down that path to change, we make the journey again and again. There is no other choice. Acceptance of this fact allows us to find the courage and the commitment to cajole our students to join us on that journey. This makes us better people as it makes us better teachers, and it models for our students that the painful path is the hopeful path. (p. 191)*

National and global events in the past year have led to critical and important conversations about the “path to change” and the political responsibility of educators in fostering, teaching, and supporting critical hope. Our current reality calls for courageous educational interventions in higher education, and, as a team of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) educators it is our responsibility (and privilege!) to continuously, and critically, examine our vision, objectives, and practices in these ever-evolving social and political contexts. We are thankful for this journey, for our facilitators who help lead others down this hopeful path, and for our partners, collaborators, and participants who make change in their communities.

Together with our staff, student, and alumni facilitators, as well as our campus collaborators, the IDP team has been working to answer important questions related to the role of critical dialogue in processes of change, our objective to both raise awareness and support behavioral and institutional change, and our desire to bring people together without compromising critical work around difference, privilege and discrimination.

These are not new questions. We have been exploring them for several years now and it is our obligation to keep asking them and to find new answers that better address both current developments and ongoing challenges. Aiming to implement a holistic and effective approach to diversity education that addresses the key needs of our community, our team revamped our educational model for raising awareness and creating change.

**Our enhanced model is based on four key development areas drawn from both scholarly research and our own internal assessment and extensive experience:**



### Human Connection

Strengthening our innate capacities to connect authentically with ourselves and others.



### Social Identity

Exploring the impact of social identities on individuals' feelings, perspectives and experiences; and understanding how identities are linked to discrimination and privilege at individual, interpersonal and institutional levels.



### Intergroup Communication

Collaborative communication in which we broaden our perspectives, challenge preconceived notions, build relationships and develop mutual understanding.



### Strategic Change

Comprehending our own roles in complex systems of inequity, pursuing opportunities for social change, and leveraging personal and collective resources to strive for social justice.

An abundance of empirical evidence demonstrates the importance of authentic human connection in building community and coping with social divisiveness and loneliness. Authentic connections are supported by engagement with social identities - one's own and others'; this model emphasizes exploration of personal and intersectional experiences of privilege and discrimination and deep understanding of biases, power, and conflict that hinder human connection. Skill development in intergroup communication is necessary for increased understanding of and collaboration around eliminating inequities on campus and beyond. Strategic change, the final pillar of our model, asks participants to recognize and act on their own power to create a more just university and society.

Integrating multiple frameworks for increased effectiveness and relying on involvement from multiple constituencies, this model reaches undergraduate students, graduate and professional students, staff, faculty, and alumni in different ways tailored to each group's unique needs. Evidence-based approaches informing this model, as well as the results of qualitative and quantitative data collected to assess this model's impact at Cornell, enable us to develop and lead meaningful interventions on campus and work towards one of Cornell's core values, a community of belonging.

We are ready (and excited) to "make the journey again and again" and to teach, learn, and experience audacious hope.

- Adi



# CORNELL Giving Day

3.11.21

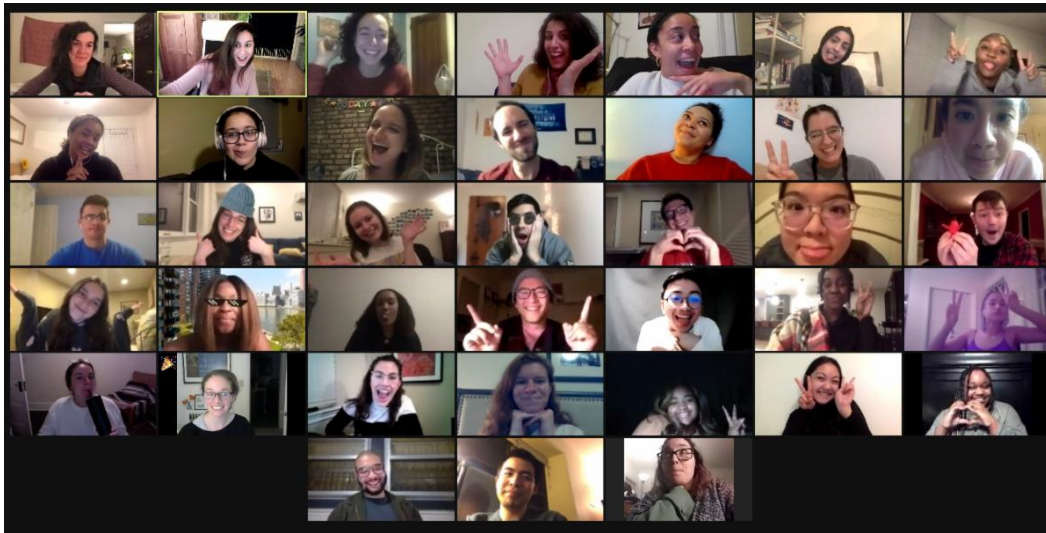
Thanks to all of you who chose to support IDP for Giving Day last year. The funds raised, as well as other generous gifts from alumni, enabled us to expand our existing offerings for students, alumni, faculty and staff, as well as continue developing custom offerings for various groups and departments. Your support allows us to bring dialogue into more spaces and to have a greater influence on campus climate.

## MAKE A GIFT

### New Developments

IDP continues to play a prominent role in fostering an inclusive campus environment that supports a diverse community of students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Our expansion continues as we work to meet the needs of the Cornell community and to influence campus climate. There is a growing demand for learning and practicing communication and collaboration across difference in academic departments, classrooms, labs, student organizations, residential communities, and many other spaces on campus, and our unique diversity education programs continue to show both their short- and long-term effectiveness in this regard.

Read on for more about ongoing and upcoming developments!



[Our Spring 2021 Community at Cornell Facilitators](#)

## EDUC 2610 (Intergroup Dialogue): Teaching & Learning Virtually

On March 13, 2020 the IDP team cleaned out the office fridge, we packed up our computers and plants to bring home with us, and we turned off the lights on our beloved office. We were bewildered and overwhelmed. It's hard to believe it's been almost a year since we had to completely reimagine what critical intergroup dialogue could look like online. Was it even possible? Could our participants still connect vulnerably and openly in a virtual environment? Could our facilitators manage to create the brave space needed for critical dialogues about challenging social and political issues?

Our spring 2020 EDUC 2610 students were nearly halfway through the course, when we realized we would have to completely reimagine the second half of the course in just a few weeks. Our committed staff and dedicated spring 2020 facilitators showed amazing adaptability and creativity. We developed innovative ways to recreate the dialogue experience over Zoom and to bring people together in a time of uncertainty, fear, and immense hardship. There were novel challenges posed by the reality of social distancing and virtual teaching and learning but there was also a strong desire to continue connecting with others authentically and to practice skills and tools for meaningful collaboration across differences. Zoom reactions, breakout rooms, discussion boards, polls, and chat capabilities allowed us to continue engaging with concepts and each other, and to create educational spaces where participants could embody community agreements, share their perspectives, and learn from one another. We are inspired by the impact critical intergroup dialogue has had on the Cornell community in the past year. Although we are no longer sitting in circles with each other, our new tools, exercises, and facilitation techniques have enabled us to continue this important work with curiosity and empathy.



Our Spring 2020 EDUC 2610 Facilitators

Here's what some of our spring 2020 EDUC 2610 students had to say:

- *The discussion board was a very good structure... which had unique benefits (for example, we could be extremely deliberate and thoughtful in our delivery and phrasing).*
- *I think the way the class was set up was amazing. IDP is all about in-person communication and... [they] made sure that we had the same effect in our online classes.*
- *I thought this class did a good job ensuring that students could still connect and communicate with their classmates despite not being able to do this in person.*

## IDP Lends Expertise to NYS Public Health Corps

The New York governor's office is launching the nation's first public health corps to support New York's massive effort to vaccinate nearly 20 million New Yorkers and improve long-term public health outcomes across the state. As part of the effort, up to 1,000 fellows will complete an intensive public health training featuring [curriculum developed by Cornell](#) before assisting with vaccine operations. The IDP team was incredibly honored to be invited to contribute to this important initiative by helping to develop one of the training's modules focusing on skills to communicate across differences. Our content and exercises support future public health fellows in their important and complex community engagement efforts. This was an exciting opportunity for us to develop new ways to apply intergroup dialogue frameworks and tools in a public health setting at such a critical moment for our society. We hope our training modules will empower public health fellows to bring curiosity and empathy to their work in this groundbreaking role!



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## Engaging Across Political Difference

The 2020 U.S. election had a profound impact on all members of our community. For many, this election felt like a referendum on many critical socio-political issues, such as health care, free speech, racial justice, climate change, gun control, immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, religious freedom, minimum wage, etc. The strong emotions and memories from 2016 and the profound polarization of political discourse made addressing these issues in classrooms, mentoring/advising conversations, and other educational spaces both more urgent and more difficult than before.

As an academic unit focusing on building communities across difference, we recognized a critical need for open, brave, and authentic conversations about political issues and across political differences. It was crucial for us to create opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to engage in such conversations and to build their capacity to collaborate across political differences as well as to promote change and critical hope in their Cornell communities.

In our sessions focusing on these issues, students, faculty, and staff engaged with challenging questions related to our political reality, vision for the future, democratic education, and opportunities for collaboration across difference. In an effort to support faculty and staff members as they too navigated challenging conversations around the election, we created the [IDP 2020 Election Guide](#). The guide contains our best practices for engaging meaningfully about contentious issues, and continues to be useful after the election. [We were encouraged to hear from colleagues](#) that the election guide helped them assess their readiness to lead meaningful conversations, plan intentional engagements around the election and political issues, and lead meaningful conversations with their students.

## Coming Soon: Inclusive Leadership Course

Part of our work this year was thinking about ways we can continue working with students in academic settings beyond EDUC 2610. One of our ideas was an undergraduate course for inclusive leadership, and we are happy to announce that we are partnering with ILR to offer it this semester. [ILRID 4675 \(Inclusive Leadership\)](#) will be taught during the second half of Spring 2021 and will focus on putting traditional models of leadership in conversation with the work of activists, artists, and writers. We are hoping this conversation will challenge us to examine our preconceived notions about “diversity,” “inclusion,” and “leadership” and also encourage us to imagine new possibilities for leading empathetically and equitably. The course will be taught by our curriculum specialist, Dr. Stephen Kim. In response to student demand, we have decided to offer the course again in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, and we hope that it will become an illuminating and rewarding experience for those seeking more diversity education at Cornell.



Dr. Stephen Kim, ILRID 4675 Instructor

## Expanding Opportunities for Faculty & Staff

This summer we worked with nearly 300 faculty in a [series of summer workshops on how to engage in conversations on racism](#) in the classroom, department, lab, and other academic settings (hosted in collaboration with the Office of Faculty Development and Diversity).

We also launched our inaugural course for faculty, [Building Connections with Dialogue](#), a semester-long engagement open to faculty across the university. Our cohort included 45 faculty from 33 departments across 7 colleges. The program offered participants a variety of tools, processes, and frameworks to develop more equitable and effective educational strategies, and integrate dialogue into a range of experiences with colleagues and students.

## Staff Partner Spotlight: Steph Cowling-Rich



### **Meet Steph Cowling-Rich, Assistant Director of Student Advising and Engagement in OADI & EOP/HEOP Advisor!**

We are very fortunate to have Steph co-leading our year-long course for academic advisors, *Advising Across Difference*, for the second time now! This course provides participants with sustained opportunities to explore how social identities inform advising processes; to practice tools for leading and communicating across difference; and to build a professional network of academic advisors committed to systemic change. Steph's inspiring vision for academic advising at Cornell, as well as her extensive experience facilitating meaningful educational processes make her an invaluable member of the team. We are thankful for her wisdom, energy, and leadership. Here's what Steph has to say about herself and her work:

*"I particularly focus on advising and crafting programming for undergraduates who are the first in their families to go to college, low-income students, and students of color. My professional life has focused on young adult post-secondary transitions through college and career. Academically, I received my Bachelors in*

*Sociology and Masters in Education both from UC Berkeley. Additionally, I have studied Women's Spirituality, Non-Violent Communication (NVC), Insight Meditation, Brazilian dance, and, of course, Intergroup Dialogue. I have had the honor and privilege of co-facilitating our "Advising across Difference" IDP course for academic advisors with the wonderful Adi, for the past two years. I am particularly interested in integrating practices of reflection, mindfulness, social justice, goal setting, visioning, and deep interpersonal communication within the spaces I engage in at Cornell."*

## "I" Statements Podcast Updates

IDP's podcast "I" Statements has been listened to over 4,000 times since being launched in late 2019. We enjoy using this format to share intergroup dialogue's signature complexity, vulnerability, and curiosity with new audiences and familiar friends. Each episode offers a candid conversation about social identities and their relationship to a topic such as joy, objectivity, or transitions. You can find our existing catalog [on most podcast apps](#) or on [our website](#). New episodes are released at the beginning of each month. For those who'd like to go beyond listening and integrate this material into a course you teach or a group you're part of, we've prepared discussion questions, written prompts, and related readings for each episode in our [Listening & Learning with the "I" Statements Podcast](#) guide. At the end of each episode, Rachel invites listeners to reach out with their ideas for episode topics; honestly, no one has ever taken her up on this offer and she would be *thrilled* if you [emailed her](#) with a topic that you'd like to see covered in a future episode of "I" Statements.



### References

Duncan-Andrade, J. M. R. (2009). Note to Educators: Hope Required When Growing Roses in Concrete. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79, 181-194.

## DIALOGUE ACROSS DIFFERENCE

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