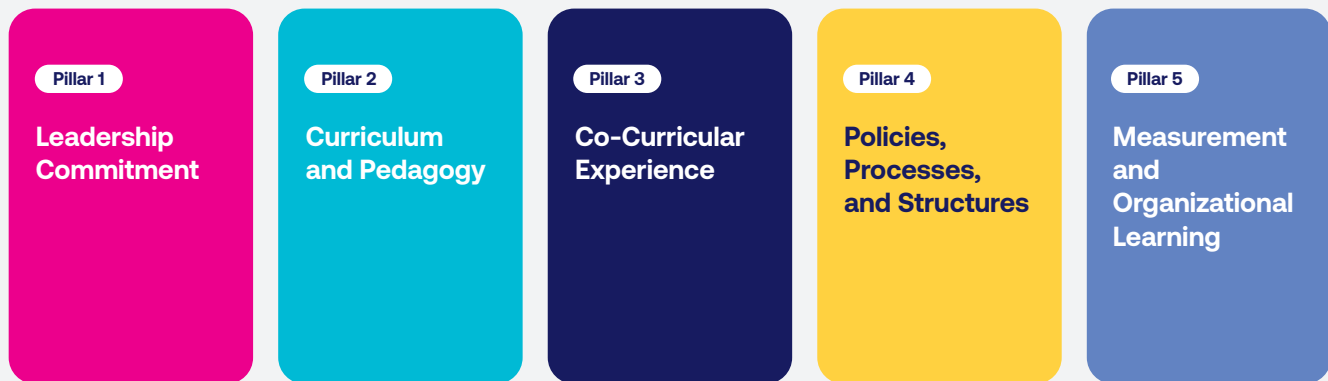


# A Culture of Inquiry and Dialogue

In a **culture of inquiry and dialogue**, curiosity drives exploration, multiple perspectives deepen understanding, and dialogue balances rigor with generosity. Within this culture, lively intellectual exchanges challenge assumptions, spark discovery, and turn disagreement into a catalyst for growth and learning.

## Pillars



## Values



Colleges and universities advancing this culture:

- **Value pluralism:** Foster meaningful engagement across varied backgrounds and viewpoints, while recognizing each individual's dignity.
- **Champion open inquiry:** Invite hard questions, conflicting perspectives, and intellectual honesty while embracing continuous learning.
- **Protect free expression:** Safeguard the right to speak up while encouraging listening and accountability.
- **Promote constructive dialogue:** Create conditions where differing perspectives are explored together with intellectual humility and the intention of advancing understanding.
- **Build trust:** Approach interactions with honesty and respect, and shape decisions through transparency and participation.

By fostering a culture of open inquiry and dialogue, institutions prepare students to tackle complex challenges and develop the skills and dispositions for democratic citizenship.

# The Five Pillars of a Culture of Inquiry and Dialogue

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Colleges and universities seeking to foster a culture of inquiry and dialogue weave the values of pluralism, open inquiry, free expression, constructive dialogue, and trust throughout their institutional fabric, advancing them through the following five strategic pillars:

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## 1. Leadership Commitment

**What it means:** Presidents, trustees, and senior leaders visibly elevate inquiry and dialogue as institutional priorities, underscoring their centrality through clear statements, visible actions, strategic decisions, and targeted investments.

### STRATEGIES:

- **Public Commitment:** Leaders consistently articulate the values of inquiry and dialogue in speeches, policies, and communications.
- **Mission and Strategic Plan:** Commitments are embedded in the institution's mission, vision, and strategic plan.
- **Modeling:** Leaders engage across differences, modeling these values in their discourse, governance, and decision-making.
- **Infrastructure and Resources:** Leaders allocate time, funding, and recognition to strengthen programs and structures that foster inquiry and dialogue.

## 2. Curriculum and Pedagogy

**What it means:** Academic life prepares every student to think independently and with nuance, participate in dialogue across ideological divides, and consider multiple perspectives.

### STRATEGIES:

- **Curricular Integration:** Core requirements expose students to a wide range of perspectives and cultivate habits of open inquiry.
- **Faculty Development:** Faculty receive training, resources, and incentives to design courses that integrate multiple perspectives and to build their capacity to facilitate dialogue on sensitive topics.
- **Pedagogy:** Faculty use evidence-based strategies to foster inquiry and dialogue, encouraging students to question assumptions, examine multiple perspectives, and build the skills to engage across differences.

### 3. Co-Curricular Experience

**What it means:** Across co-curricular life, students form relationships across differences and practice open, respectful exchange, reinforced by leaders' example and by campus traditions and norms.

#### STRATEGIES:

- **Co-Curricular Engagement:** Throughout their time on campus—in orientation, residence halls, and student activities—students have opportunities to foster relationships across differences and build dialogue skills through intentionally designed programs.
- **Student Leadership:** Student leaders such as orientation advisors, teaching assistants, peer mentors, and graduate assistants are trained and resourced to lead dialogue and navigate difficult conversations.
- **Staff and Administrator Development:** Staff and administrators are equipped and incentivized to facilitate difficult conversations, model respectful disagreement, and support dialogue in daily interactions.
- **Social Norms and Cultural Reinforcement:** Traditions, messaging, and peer modeling reinforce informal norms that sustain a campus-wide culture of inquiry and dialogue.

### 4. Policies, Processes, and Structures

**What it means:** College and university policies, processes, and norms are guided by principles of a culture of inquiry and dialogue.

#### STRATEGIES:

- **Policies and Procedures:** Clear, consistently applied codes and grievance policies protect free expression, promote respectful disagreement, and ensure transparent, neutral conflict resolution.
- **Deliberative Processes:** Decision-making processes incorporate input from faculty, staff, and students, embedding dialogue into how policies are shaped and implemented.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Dialogue initiatives, civic engagement programs, academic centers, and related activities are coordinated across divisions in a unified campus-wide strategy to advance a culture of inquiry and dialogue.

### 5. Measurement and Organizational Learning

**What it means:** The institution sets clear goals and metrics for building a culture of constructive dialogue, regularly evaluates progress, and uses findings to continually refine programs, policies, and strategies.

- **Goal-Setting and Metrics:** The campus defines success for a culture of inquiry and dialogue and tracks progress with clear indicators.
- **Evaluation:** Program leaders regularly assess dialogue efforts, drawing on campus-wide data.
- **Learning and Adaptation:** Findings are used to refine programs, policies, and strategies over time, creating a continuous feedback loop that strengthens the culture.