

Constructive Dialogue: Fostering Trust, Curiosity, and Deeper Learning in the Classroom An American Democracy Project Initiative in Partnership with OpenMind

AASCU's American Democracy Project (ADP) is pleased to invite you to participate in a one-year initiative in partnership with OpenMind, a non-profit that builds educational tools to equip the next generation with the skills to navigate differences by questioning their assumptions, seeking out diverse sources of information, and engaging constructively with people of differing backgrounds, beliefs, and values.

ADP – a network of nearly 300 AASCU institutions, serving 2.7 million students – works to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to be informed and engaged, ready to tackle current and future issues to ensure a thriving and equitable democracy. This project aims to provide faculty with the unique opportunity to collaborate and explore new ways to engage in dialogue and learning as an instructor and with a cohort.

Call for Participation

ADP seeks faculty from all disciplines to join a one-year initiative as learning partners from summer 2022 to summer 2023. Participants will have access to OpenMind's full suite of educational tools for students and instructors. They will also have the opportunity to engage in dialogue and learning both as a cohort, and with thought leaders in the field of constructive dialogue. We will come together monthly as a community of practice to discuss what educators are seeing in their classrooms and campuses, the challenges they face, and the promising practices for fostering constructive dialogue and intellectual humility at the classroom and campus levels.

We encourage cohort members to integrate and implement OpenMind's tools and resources over the course of the 2022-2023 academic year and discuss their experiences. We welcome and encourage all disciplines to apply. The initiative will begin June 2022 and any faculty member from an AASCU ADP-member institution may apply to participate.

The focus of the initiative will be for participating faculty to:

- Gather virtually as a community of practice to discuss their perceptions of the need for, and their experience with, fostering constructive dialogue in classrooms and on campuses
- Discuss what high-value, ongoing, scalable communities of practice might look like for college instructors
- Use OpenMind's student-facing and educator-facing tools, share their experiences, and provide feedback on the tools and educational and administrator supports provided
- Discuss the state of polarization in classrooms and other key themes and implications

Support and Resources

Participants will have free access to the deep library of OpenMind resources, tools, and research. Since launching in 2017, OpenMind has reached more than 50,000 learners, and their research has found statistically significant effects showing that learners are less polarized, demonstrate greater intellectual humility and growth mindset, and report increased feelings of belonging in the classroom.

Participants from institutions will also receive a stipend.

Expectations

Each participant will be asked to utilize OpenMind's educator- and student-facing tools within their classroom during the 2022-2023 academic year. OpenMind will provide free access to all cohort members in summer 2022.

Each faculty participant will be asked to attend monthly meetings. Individuals will form a community of practice, working together to exchange ideas and develop effective strategies, through 60-minute monthly group Zoom meetings and optional smaller working group meetings from September 2022 through May 2023. We will also be using the project management tool BaseCamp to allow more camaraderie and connection as a cohort.

In addition, the cohort will enjoy two in-person meetings at the 2022 and 2023 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) conferences. Though these in-person meetings are optional, we encourage attendance and OpenMind will host a private reception during each CLDE meeting for the cohort. Participants will also be encouraged to submit session proposals for CLDE23, as a means to demonstrate their takeaways from this cohort initiative.

Application

Interested AASCU-member institution faculty should fill out the [online application](#) by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday, May 16, 2022. Questions can be directed to Cathy Copeland copelandc@aacu.org and Felice Nudelman nudelmanf@aacu.org. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis starting May 20, 2022.

We hope you will consider participating in this special initiative.

All best,

Felice and Cathy

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