

Duke Conversations

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Overview for Faculty

Spring 2021: Virtual Conversations (COVID-19)

The Planning Process

1. **Schedule the conversation:** Let us know the date that works best with you. We usually set up the virtual conversations from 7:00 to 8:00pm EST between Monday and Thursday. However, the time of the conversation can be flexible. This semester, we'll be holding events from January 27th to April 16th.
2. **Arrange the details:** Select your topic of interest and choose how many students you'd like to host (usually 5-12).
3. **We select the students:** Duke Conversations will send out an email to our listserv the week before your conversation and begin receiving student sign ups. We'll select one of our team members to facilitate your conversation, and they'll choose a diverse group of students from various majors and class years.
4. **We organize logistics:** After we accept the students, I'll connect you with the team member, who will send you a reminder and let you know who will be attending. They will also create a zoom link for you and the attending students, which will be sent out the day of your conversation.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What if I can't host this semester?**

If you are interested in Duke Conversations but aren't available for Spring 2021, let us know! We can reach out again for the fall or next spring (when we can hopefully revert back to dinners).

- **What will the conversation be like?**

We'll be holding the conversation on zoom. Once the students arrive on the chat, everyone can introduce themselves, you can describe the topic and why it interests you. The students can then engage with the topic, relating it to their own opinions or experiences!

- **How can I best facilitate the conversation and engage students?**

- Open with an introduction relating to your experience with the topic.
- Encourage everyone to participate and try to ensure that quieter students have the opportunity to speak.
- Ask a lot of open-ended questions! Ask how aspects of your topic connect to students and their lives.
- Be open to the conversation drifting to another topic: one of the most beautiful parts of conversation is that you never know where you'll end up. If the conversation ends at a much different place than where you started, and you're willing to talk about it, go for it!

- **What should I choose as my topic?**

It's entirely up to you! Previous conversations have dealt with topics ranging from "Life after Graduation" to "Free Speech on Campus" and "Women in STEM." The best topics

are those that students can relate to on a personal level. While the theme might touch on

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your academic work, it should also be a way for students and professors to get to know each other as people.

- **Where can I learn more about Duke Conversations?**

You can view our [website](#), our [Instagram](#) page, or this [video](#). If you'd like to nominate a colleague to host a dinner, please fill out this [form](#).