

## Campus Commons Cohort 1: 2025 Implementation Projects

### Maya Zimmerman (Pittsburgh, PA; McGill University) - *Dialogue Dinners*

Dialogues Dinners is a two-part dinner series with students from a range of Jewish perspectives on my campus to cultivate connections and engage in Israel-Palestine dialogue. I will host these two meals in my house and create an intentional schedule for first connecting and then engaging in discourse across a shared meal. *(Right: a picture from the dinner.)*



### Ilan Berdy (Los Angeles, CA; UCLA) - *Dialogue Day*

The Israel-Palestine Dialogue Project is a multi-week initiative aimed at fostering open, respectful dialogue among students with diverse perspectives on the conflict. Through individual meetings, group discussions, social bonding events, and moderated conversations, the program emphasizes understanding over agreement, creating a safe space for expression, trust-building, and collective learning.

### Talia Holtzman (Reston, VA; Scripps College) - *Escape the Echochamber!*

I will begin with anonymous whiteboard posters with questions related to pluralism (e.g., what is one thing you wish people understood about you?) with a QR code for resources to have bridge building conversations, as a promotion for events. I will then have 2-3 events with bridge building conversations, open to all Scripps students. Student facilitators would help run these events. The first conversation will be "Are online debates productive or performative? How do you think political engagement on social media has impacted your beliefs?" *(Right: One of the posters.)*



**Talia received over 250 responses to her posters** and reported, "I even had someone tell me yesterday that one of [the posters] sparked a lengthy conversation with a friend about the importance of ideological homogeneity/heterogeneity in classes... One of the most impactful lessons I've carried into this project from my Campus Commons experience is the importance of setting shared group

intentions, not only as a way to create a safe environment for dialogue, but also to align priorities... **I want to create a culture where people don't just tolerate opposing viewpoints, but engage with them without ostracizing others or reinforcing their own bubbles."**

**Henry Karpovas Lisak (São Paulo, Brazil; University of Minnesota Twin Cities) - *Do I Belong on Campus? Tell Your Story***

Throughout the past 8 months, I, along with Muslim leaders and Christian leaders, have been working with the DEI Department at the University of Minnesota on a Dialogue Planning Task Force to create a safer campus for students of different religions and cultures. Unfortunately, we have been unsuccessful in bringing our groups together in dialogue. We have realized that first, we must build a stronger sense of safety and belonging within our own community. The project is creating an opportunity for Jewish students to share their experiences of belonging and not belonging as a Jew on campus with fellow Jewish students and with university DEI professionals. We intend for this to be a jumping-off point for further conversation with campus professionals that will lead us into more diverse conversation and community.

**Maddy Hefner (Ontario, Canada; University of British Columbia) - *Threads of Judaism: Weaving our Identities Together***

This event is designed to foster meaningful conversations about Jewish identity and pluralism. Participants will explore what being Jewish means to them and others, using personal storytelling, creative activities, and Jewish text study. The goal is to build relationships and understanding among Jews from diverse backgrounds, laying the foundation for deeper connections and tolerance for nuance.

After the event, Maddy said, "Many of the students in the group are leaders of different Jewish clubs, and it was the first time they were able to talk openly about how they want to work together more, as well as things they disagree on but still want to move forward with. It was very beautiful to see... Two students reached out to me later, thanking me for creating a space where they could finally talk openly about Judaism and Zionism, something they had been longing for but hadn't found on campus until now. **They expressed that it was the first time in their college experience that they felt safe enough to engage in this type of dialogue."**