

March 2026

Recommendations for Sustaining Constructive Engagement, Open Inquiry, and Healthy Pluralism

Constructive Engagement Working Group
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health



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Report Summary

The ability to engage across differences, inquire openly, and continually learn is central to academic excellence and public health. In May 2025, Dean Baccarelli requested the formation of a Working Group to develop practical recommendations for sustaining healthy pluralism and constructive engagement at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The Working Group included 14 Harvard Chan School students, staff, and faculty. It met from June to August 2025.

In this report, the Working Group affirms our School's commitment to constructive engagement and emphasizes a pursuit of this goal that is fully consistent with scientific rigor, our community values, and our School's vision of health, dignity, and justice for all. The report focuses on practical recommendations for this pursuit, summarized as follows:

Recommendations for communicating and reinforcing values and expectations on viewpoint diversity, open inquiry, and pluralism

1. Develop a guiding Constructive Engagement Framework for fostering a shared culture of pluralism, viewpoint diversity, and open inquiry at the School.
2. Shape the norms and expectations of behavior across research, teaching, learning, and administration to operationalize the Constructive Engagement Framework.
3. Create a standing Committee on Constructive Engagement to guide application of the framework and the recommendations from the Working Group.
4. Implement an intentional data gathering and learning strategy to inform approaches to constructive engagement and viewpoint diversity over time.

Recommendations for educational programs

5. Adopt Chatham House Rule as a foundation for classroom norms and building trust.
6. Develop resources and pedagogical tools to support faculty in applying the Framework for Constructive Engagement in their classrooms while also designing opportunities that help students build the skills necessary for constructive dialogue and viewpoint diversity as a critical component of career readiness.
7. Integrate constructive engagement approaches into the Advanced Learning Academy.

Recommendations for Schoolwide programming and engagement

8. Establish communications that reinforce our commitment, including through intentional orientation of staff, faculty, and students and throughout their experience at the School.
9. Develop and implement a strategy for embedding constructive dialogue and exposure to diverse viewpoints at Schoolwide events.
10. Establish clear processes for responding to highly emotional or charged incidents.
11. Seek to foster constructive engagement not only within the School but throughout society on issues related to population health.

Background

We are living in a moment in which constructive engagement across differences is deeply vital and yet increasingly challenging to do. This is notably apparent in both academia and public health. Multiple factors have led to this moment, including government pressure in higher education, student activism following the events of October 7, 2023, ongoing issues about U.S. racial inequality, and mistrust in science following COVID-19, among others. At Harvard, there is much to face, including evidence of fear and harm cited in Harvard's task force reports on both Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israel Bias as well as Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian Bias. In addition, there is evidence of reluctance to discuss charged topics inside and outside of class, as evidenced by the [University's Report on Open Inquiry and Constructive Dialogue](#). These are important signals of a need for change.

The primary purpose of the Working Group on Constructive Engagement was to develop practical recommendations for nurturing an inclusive culture, encouraging open inquiry, and building capacity within our School to engage respectfully across differences. We reviewed the many important existing efforts on this topic within Harvard Chan and the University, and we sought to better understand the current culture at our School. In deliberating, we affirmed our School's commitment to constructive engagement and emphasized a pursuit of this goal that is fully consistent with scientific rigor, our community values, and our School's vision of health, dignity, and justice for all. We sought recommendations that would build on our strengths, draw from other schools' innovations, and be practical and feasible, especially amid budget constraints.

We identified strengths, gaps, and recommendations across three areas: communication and School climate, Schoolwide programming and engagement, and curricular skill-building partnerships. In doing so, each group member brought their own perspective; we frequently disagreed—these are not easy topics. Yet we sought to model constructive engagement as we did, and the respect, humility, care, and intelligence that make our community special were apparent throughout. The recommendations that we have agreed upon as a result aim to support long-term strategies and meaningful cultural change. Nonetheless, we view them as a starting place rather than an end. Efforts of this nature take time, care, trust, ongoing input, and engagement from all.

Review Process

The Working Group met three times as a full group and formed four sub-groups that each met between three and five additional times for in-depth discussion. There were over 20 hours of meetings spent across the group (in addition to hours of document review). Sub-group focal topics included:

1. Framework for approaching constructive engagement
2. Communication & School climate
3. Schoolwide programming, engagement, and skill-building
4. Curricular skill-building and partnerships

Members reviewed the initiatives, documents, and experiences outlined in **Exhibit 1**, covering:

- Relevant University-wide communications and working group reports from other Harvard schools, including from Harvard Business School, Harvard Kennedy School, and Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences
- Harvard Chan School mission, vision, principles of citizenship, LEADS, Schoolwide communications and policies
- Curricula and materials from Harvard Chan School classes, teaching fellow trainings, peer faculty workshops, admissions, events, and orientation materials
- Held seven 1:1 conversations with stakeholders within and across peer schools at Harvard University and members of related task forces on this topic

Committee Timeline

Activity	Timing
Constructive Engagement WG meeting 1 kickoff	June 30
Subcommittees meet 1-2 times separately	July 1-July 16
Constructive Engagement WG meeting 2	July 18
Interim report sent to Dean	July 28
Subcommittees meet 1-2 times (summaries due 8/6)	July 20 - August 6
Constructive Engagement WG meeting 3	August 12
Draft, revise, and finalize	August 13-25
Include members in the draft and revision process	August 13-September 5
Finalize recommendation report	September 8-12
Report deadline for submission to Dean	September 15

Findings and Recommendations

Recommendations for communicating and reinforcing values and expectations on viewpoint diversity, open inquiry, and pluralism

Recommendation 1:

Develop a guiding Constructive Engagement Framework for fostering a shared culture of pluralism, viewpoint diversity, and open inquiry at the School.

Key finding:

Initial Working Group discussions were centered on the importance of defining our core principles and values as they pertain to open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive engagement. This initial step was crucial for establishing a shared perspective centered on our profession's goal of promoting and protecting the health and well-being of populations through public health research, policy, and practice. We found a clear desire for a shared approach to constructive engagement, viewpoint diversity, and open inquiry that crystallizes what we value as a school, including how we can approach the inherent benefits and challenges in fostering it.

Specific guidance:

- To advance this end, we developed a provisional framework to guide the various specific actions, policies, and programmatic recommendations of the Working Group as well as to guide future related work within the School, drawing on examples from other institutions such as the Harvard Open Inquiry Report, the [Princeton Principles](#) for a Campus of Free Inquiry, and the [Chicago Principles](#).
- We propose that the drafted framework be considered and refined by the Dean and other leadership of our School, and if they find it helpful to pursue further, to share with our School community for discussion. We believe that the conversations that come from this framework are what is most important.
- The framework articulates both the benefits and the bounds of constructive engagement and viewpoint diversity in a pluralistic academic institution and is consistent with our School's mission and values.

Proposed Framework for Constructive Engagement at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Our Commitment to Constructive Engagement with Diversity in all its Forms

We commit to fostering a culture of constructive engagement that is consistent with academic excellence, [Harvard University Community Values](#), and our School's vision of health, dignity, and justice for all. We commit to open inquiry, exploring diverse viewpoints, ensuring non-discrimination, and teaching, modeling, and practicing constructive engagement.

The Critical Importance of Pluralism, Open Inquiry, and Viewpoint Diversity at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Pluralism can spur excellence by encouraging learning, creativity in problem-solving, and the advancement of knowledge. We acknowledge and value that our students, staff, faculty, and visitors bring differences. Engagement with the pluralism that is present fosters respect for those who are marginalized, disadvantaged, or hold minority viewpoints, enabling their views to be heard. Open inquiry, an intellectual practice of questioning and openly discussing ideas and evidence, is central to academic work.

Ensuring that Viewpoint Diversity Is Supportive of Academic Excellence, our Mission, and the Pursuit of Truth

Evaluation of diverse viewpoints should align with our academic mission to improve health and advance equity so that everyone can thrive. This requires emphasizing viewpoints supported by evidence and sound reasoning. We are committed to the pursuit of truth, with humility to acknowledge that we do not possess it but continually seek it.

Prioritizing viewpoint diversity does not require representation of all topics and views at all times. Consideration of viewpoints and evidence should focus on scholarly and professional topics relevant to our school's mission to improve health.

Ensuring that Viewpoint Diversity Is Consistent with our Community Values and Non-Discrimination

We are committed to the principle of free expression as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. All views can be raised, and all questions can be asked. We hold that this can and must be consistent with upholding the Harvard University [Non-discrimination Policy](#). This is also consistent with the Harvard University-wide Statement on Rights and Responsibilities, which expresses our strong commitment to free speech, including the right to protest and dissent, as well as the rights of Harvard community members to learn, teach, research, live, and work without interference or disruption.

We aspire to conduct constructive and rigorous discussions across diverse viewpoints within our School with respect, curiosity, and engagement with evidence. This reflects our commitment to fostering a learning and working environment where we are focused on being accountable to one another.

Nonetheless, the opportunity to voice a view comes with the opportunity for others to respectfully disagree. Constructive engagement will be challenging, and at times uncomfortable, and may lead to considerable negative emotion, especially when others' views indicate different values or deeply held beliefs that are counter to one's own.

Our commitment to open inquiry and free expression does not require us to accept or condone bullying, harassment, defamatory statements, or discrimination, which may be reported and reviewed under the [University's Non-Discrimination](#) and Anti-Bullying Policies and the School's Standards of Conduct.

Remaining Committed to Academic Freedom

Constructive engagement with diverse views must remain compatible with our School's commitment to academic freedom and civil discourse. This includes the freedom of a teacher or researcher to investigate and discuss the issues in their academic field without interference, as well as the freedom of students and staff to share and discuss their views and evidence in our learning community. School leadership has an important role in guiding and encouraging diverse viewpoints and open inquiry at the School; however, neither School leadership nor outside forces should compel faculty to cover (or avoid) specific scholarly content in their syllabi or research.

Fostering a Learning and Improvement Environment

Constructive engagement is a skill and a practice that we are committed to building; it is likely that even acting in good faith, we will nevertheless not always get it right. We commit to supporting one another in learning how to engage across differences. This requires effort, patience, and a sincere commitment to extend grace to one another.

*This document is intended as a framework to articulate and guide our shared perspective as a school; it is neither an official policy nor a binding document.

* As part of our deliberations, the Working Group conducted a survey of its members to assess whether to recommend that the Chan School formally adopt the Chicago Principles. We received responses from all of our 14 members: six did not consent to proceed and registered strong objections, four were proponents of proceeding, and four had reservations but agreed to proceed. Thus, we did not include a recommendation to sign onto the Chicago Principles as part of this report, opting instead to focus for now on our own framework described in the box above.

Recommendation 2:

Shape the norms and expectations of behavior across research, teaching, learning, and administration to operationalize the Constructive Engagement Framework.

Key finding:

With many principles for how people are expected to act at the School and the broader University, there is a need for a clearer, streamlined statement of behaviors to model for students, faculty, and staff.

Specific guidance:

- Update the “Principles of Citizenship” to “Principles of Engagement” to align with the framework and clearly articulate behaviors that support constructive engagement, ensuring consistent use across Schoolwide communications.
- There should be integration across the Principles of Engagement, LEADS–Building Capacity for Constructive Engagement, and the Standards of Conduct language across our community.
- These behaviors should be referenced in Student Orientation as well as staff and faculty on-boarding, linked to in class curricula, shared in advance of public-facing and Schoolwide community events, and in communications across stakeholder groups.
- Encourage School leadership to model constructive engagement and civil discourse in their communications across the School, setting the tone for respectful dialogue across diverse viewpoints.
- Make available tools and techniques to promote a shared identity as members of open and constructive learning communities, as identified in the University’s Report on Open Inquiry and Constructive Engagement.

Recommendation 3:

Create a standing Committee on Constructive Engagement to guide application of the framework and the recommendations from the Working Group.

Key finding:

There is a great deal to learn about how we foster constructive engagement effectively as a school. This work would benefit from a structured mechanism to steward our evolution on this important topic over time; viewpoint diversity comes alive through engagement on our campus and pluralism must be actively attended to.

Specific guidance:

A standing committee should meet bimonthly to focus on constructive engagement.

- *Purpose:* The committee should be advisory, giving input to School leadership; it should not have decision-making authority, nor should it be relied upon to adjudicate issues directly.
- *Structure:* Committee can be formed initially by the WG, with members added or shifted as needed; structural elements could include:

- 10–15 people
- Two-year membership commitments for faculty and non-faculty academic appointee representatives
- One-year commitments for student representatives
- Staff representatives should include a mix of representatives (e.g., from the Office of Educational Programs, Office for Community and Belonging, Student Affairs, Faculty Affairs, IT, Facilities, Human Resources, and Communications)
- Co-chairs representing both staff and faculty
- Tasks of the Committee could include:
 - Give input on the strategy for implementing the recommendations in this report.
 - Identify data sources to inform learning about constructive engagement on campus over time (e.g., graduating student satisfaction surveys pertaining to open inquiry, course data, etc.).
 - Discuss any high-profile or important issues or tensions that emerged on this topic during the quarter and assess response.
 - Continue to deliberate on challenging questions about how to do this work (**see table below**).
 - Review Harvard Chan Studio speakers and other high-profile guest speakers annually and provide input on opportunities for exposure to diverse views.
 - Serve ad hoc to give input to key issues facing School leadership as they emerge, such as for guidance about specific speakers, if needed.

Challenging Questions to Continue Considering*

Potential discussion questions for standing committee to continue considering

1. How can we continually seek to better understand and take seriously the perspectives of the many different communities who have been skeptical of recent public health efforts and of science?
2. How can we ensure over time that a broad range of individuals is attracted to learn at and contribute to our institution and to the field of public health, including faculty, staff, students, and visitors/speakers who represent diversity in all its forms?
3. How can we go about assessing whether important neglected population health topics are covered sufficiently here in our research and teaching, and whether/how to invest in building this capacity?
4. How can we as public health academics and professionals be most helpful to informing and improving public health in an increasingly partisan world? What can we do to help build consensus on important public health issues and areas of science?

*to begin; list is not exhaustive

Recommendation 4:

Implement an intentional data gathering and learning strategy to inform approaches to constructive engagement, and viewpoint diversity over time.

Key finding:

While the School has been collecting student data on open inquiry for the past two years, there is a need for more complete and systematic data that includes faculty, non-faculty academic appointees, and staff to inform and update our work.

Specific guidance:

- Recommend launching a pulse survey to understand diverse perspectives on constructive engagement, viewpoint diversity, and open inquiry at our School, with consideration for surveys that are more in-depth when possible. One idea is to follow the approach used by HKS by implementing an open inquiry survey of faculty, staff, and students to better understand comfort levels and barriers to expressing controversial views at the School.
- Conduct focus groups to further understand the student, faculty, and staff experience in speaking up on campus; specifically evaluate ways in which the School could be a more welcoming environment to those with a diverse range of views. Seek to understand when and how people of different backgrounds at our School have different experiences of speaking up.
- Allocate regular time to review findings (embed in faculty meeting, town hall).

Recommendations for educational programs

Recommendation 5:

Adopt Chatham House Rule for classrooms to ensure confidentiality.

Key finding:

While the tone inside a classroom can be open, in today's connected world, the prospect of having one's ideas (or, more importantly, characterizations of one's ideas or questions) be exposed without consent is a deterrent for students and faculty to freely engage.

Specific guidance:

- Adopt Chatham House Rule for classrooms. This is a communication guideline that encourages open dialogue by protecting participants' identities outside of class. It allows people to share the content of a discussion outside the room, but not who said it (also referred to as a non-attribution policy).
- Inquire with colleagues from other Harvard schools to gain a clear understanding of the adoption and implementation process of the Chatham House Rule—particularly around monitoring and discipline—to draft a consistent, institution-wide response policy.

- Present the recommendations for the adoption of a common approach to the Chatham House Rule in classroom environments to Faculty Council and Dean's Council, and discuss more broadly during a fall Faculty Meeting for feedback.
- Develop a social media and technology policy that complements the Chatham House Rule, setting limits on technology use and recording in class as well as social media posting about class materials.
- If adopted, the Committee on Educational Policy and the Teaching and Learning Support Consortium can identify a process to encourage and socialize a common approach to the Chatham House Rule in classroom environments, along with the rationale for its adoption.
- Continue to learn and develop this approach with feedback over time.

Recommendation 6:

Develop resources and pedagogical tools to support faculty in applying the Framework for Constructive Engagement in their classrooms while also designing opportunities that help students build the skills necessary for constructive dialogue and viewpoint diversity as a critical component of career readiness.

Key finding:

Many faculty who wish to integrate constructive engagement in their course content may not know how to do so and would benefit from faculty development and support. Fostering these dialogue and engagement skills will not only strengthen students' classroom experiences but also prepare them to navigate complex conversations and collaborate effectively in diverse public health settings.

Specific guidance:

- Develop tools and a community of practice to help faculty create positive learning cultures that support effective discourse—balancing open dialogue with respect, inclusivity, and evidence-based reasoning—while equipping students to carry these skills beyond the classroom.
- Develop a social compact articulating classroom norms and principles that foster constructive engagement (consistent with the Principles of Engagement in Recommendation 2 but focused on classroom norms specifically).

Teaching and Learning Recommendations by Area

Area	Key opportunities for teaching and learning
Update Schoolwide Syllabus Template	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the syllabus template's inclusivity statement and bias reporting support system statement in the educational policies section so they better reflect our shared commitment to pluralism, respect, and constructive engagement in the classroom, Schoolwide policies, and repair. This process is currently underway in partnership between the Committee on Educational Policy, the Office of Student Affairs, and the Office for Community and Belonging. • If adopted, instructors should clearly state the details of the Chatham House Rule in their syllabi at the outset of the term. Standard language will be added to the syllabus template. • Develop guidelines for classroom guest speakers that outline the expectations and responsibilities of being a member of our community. (cross referenced from Recommendation 8)
Constructive Engagement Skill-building Course Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a set of generalized course competencies pertaining to constructive engagement, especially for case-based and discussion-based courses for which multiple viewpoints are highly relevant, that could be modified across courses to ensure that faculty facilitate constructive engagement skill-building opportunities. • Recommend that degree programs choose from a set of curated competencies (examples below) to include in a required, discussion-based course or some other required programming. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (idea) Students will practice applying intellectual discipline within their field of study to evaluate a range of viewpoints, distinguishing between perspectives based on evidence and cogent reasoning versus those rooted primarily in belief or opinion. • (idea) Students demonstrate the ability to engage across differences with respect, curiosity, and humility, recognizing that diverse perspectives—including those shaped by values and beliefs—can contribute meaningfully to public health learning and practice.

Area	Key opportunities for teaching and learning
Offer skill-building opportunities through faculty peer-led workshops, department meetings, and support from the school's Office of Educational Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Faculty Council, Faculty Retreat, the Committee on Educational Policy, and departmental seminars as opportunities to share the framework, best practices, and to request feedback for teaching and learning. • Conduct focus groups with faculty, or a similar process, to understand barriers to constructive conversations in classrooms and to identify exemplary pedagogical practices already in use in our classrooms (such as setting norms and sharing pedagogical expectations, using role play, principled negotiation, or cases and vignettes that allow facilitated complex discussions). • Support faculty's ability and confidence to use a variety of pedagogical tools that create structures that allow for students to practice open inquiry and constructive dialogue across multiple perspectives on public health topics/challenges presented in courses (e.g., case studies, principled negotiation, role playing, etc.). • Incorporate constructive dialogue skills into annual Teaching Fellow Training. • Identify and support faculty leaders who can provide peer consultations, ensuring sustained access to mentorship and expertise in constructive classroom dialogue. • Explore if there is a downstream opportunity to identify small innovation grants for faculty/faculty teams to develop and pilot constructive engagement activities/initiatives for the classroom.
Advising and Mentoring	Refine the school Advising Principles to reflect a commitment to constructive engagement and emphasize the role of advisors in helping their students to understand the value of viewpoint diversity and open inquiry for our School, science, and public health.

Recommendation 7:

Integrate constructive engagement approaches into the Advanced Learning Academy.

Key Finding:

Advanced Learning Academy (non-degree) courses are a key arm of our School's educational mission and a central interface between our School and a broad audience of learners. It is an opportunity to engage diverse viewpoints broadly and to address pressing healthcare and public health challenges.

Specific guidance:

- Consider opportunities to engage diverse perspectives across the Harvard Chan faculty, guest faculty from other Harvard schools, and guest lecturers external to Harvard.

- Develop and/or adapt guidelines for Harvard Chan faculty, guest faculty from other Harvard schools, and guest lecturers external to Harvard that outline the expectations and responsibilities of being a member of our learning community (should be pursued in concert with similar guidelines for curricular and non-curricular programs (see Recommendations 6 and 8). Guidelines for external lecturers should be brief.
- Review current and planned programs to identify areas where constructive engagement skills and viewpoint diversity opportunities are incorporated and/or can be further emphasized.
- Apply the Chatham House Rule for non-degree classrooms, consistent with application throughout degree classes.

Recommendations for School-wide programming and engagement

Recommendation 8:

Establish communications that reinforce our commitment, including through intentional onboarding/orientation of staff, faculty, and students, and throughout their experience at the School.

Key finding:

Many students, faculty, and staff are unaware of our explicit commitment to constructive engagement and only learn of it through experience; there is an opportunity to more clearly articulate and model this commitment from day one.

Specific guidance:

- Ensure communication about open inquiry and constructive engagement (verbal, written) is embedded throughout the student and staff/faculty lifecycle from recruitment through daily life, to emphasize norms and values around how we engage (see Communications Recommendations by Area Table for details by area).
- Ensuring messaging is consistent across channels, two-way, and allows for a feedback loop and tailored messages.

Communications Recommendations by Area

Area	Key opportunities for communication
Recruitment and interviewing for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job postings and social-media recruiting campaigns should include a statement that reflects our commitment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example language (from Dartmouth job posting August 2025): “[Dartmouth] is committed to academic excellence and encourages the open exchange of ideas within a culture of mutual respect. Dartmouth welcomes people with different backgrounds, life experiences, and perspectives and believes that diversity in all its forms enhances academic excellence.” • Interview guides, candidate welcome packets, Q&As about Harvard Chan School’s mission and values should incorporate similar language.
Admissions for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the new question about viewpoint diversity and constructive engagement on admission applications, identify demonstrated interest in and humility with engaging across differences, including grappling with the challenges of doing so.
Onboarding and Ongoing Support for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record and share brief welcome video from the Dean and/or Standing Committee on Constructive Engagement Chair(s) describing our School’s commitment. • “First Day” onboarding guides, handbooks, team-specific kickoff meetings include Principles of Engagement and commitment to open inquiry and mutual respect. • Identify professional development opportunities for staff to practice constructive engagement in their roles.
Orientation for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a 90-minute session on fostering constructive engagement, led in partnership by the Office for Community and Belonging, the Office of Educational Programs, and the Office of Student Affairs during August Orientation. • Focus on in-person, experiential learning rather than online trainings for constructive engagement, as students in the past have not demonstrated strong demand for online trainings on this topic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For online students, identify a virtual asynchronous/synchronous learning opportunity.
Visual and verbal cues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace visuals displaying principles of citizenship with revised Principles of Engagement. • Replace signage in Kresge Cafeteria with updated images, banners that reflect Principles of Engagement, and our commitment (e.g., banners with profiles in the seating area that have been hanging for years). • Ensure language for Schoolwide announcements, town halls, and Schoolwide/governance presentations to reinforce the principles and values.

Area	Key opportunities for communication
Ongoing communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a brief statement to incorporate into communications to the School (or department/unit)—students, staff, and faculty—to reinforce commitment. • Identify opportunities to spotlight positive examples of constructive engagement (e.g., dedicated spotlight in town halls or faculty meetings). • Publicize resources (University Ombuds, CAMS, EAP) for continued support to stakeholders across our community.

Recommendation 9:

Develop and implement a strategy for embedding constructive dialogue and exposure to diverse viewpoints at Schoolwide events.

Key finding:

While admissions, orientation, and onboarding are important moments acculturating our community to constructive engagement, the fostering of this culture across Schoolwide events must occur throughout time and with intention.

Specific guidance:

- Support Studio speaking engagements on campus that reflect major influential viewpoints on key topics; use panels with multiple perspectives when possible, and when not, use moderators who are prepared to articulate with sincerity the nature of opposing views. Note that this does not mean every event must have multiple speakers for every possible view; decisions on speakers should be guided by our Framework for Constructive Engagement, including our commitment to evidence and pursuit of truth, and the array of approaches should be reviewed and learned from annually.
 - Create a brief set of framework-based guidelines that clearly contextualize events as they relate to open inquiry and constructive dialogue that can inform the [Event Planning Guidelines Process](#).
 - Identify key topics with reasonable scientific or policy disagreement and high relevance to public health and pursue events that explore underlying issues.
 - Develop a set of guidelines for guest speakers about what it means to be a member of our learning community (cross referenced with Recommendation 6).
 - Consider piloting use of Chatham House Rule for some events, if deemed helpful and appropriate.
- Foster Schoolwide events and speakers on campus that specifically examine learning and speaking across differences, with a focus on skill-building, for example:
 - Train student leaders in constructive dialogue skills to facilitate year-round opportunities.
 - Annual facilitated community book discussions (time of year, book selection process, discussion series)

- Fireside chats (informal, non-recorded, smaller group discussions where we make sense of the many tensions in the world today)
- Leverage Studio events by planning post-event dialogue opportunities for further discussion on the topics.
- Faculty/staff/student dinners (a different take but a similar format)
- Student peer-to-peer conversations focused on the mindsets and skillsets needed for constructive engagement for public health professionals
- Leverage the expertise of the Center for Health Communication for community-building events focused on constructive engagement and public health advocacy.
- Ensure that policies regarding events are applied consistently, such as rules for [postering](#).
 - Vetting and reviewing a speaker will occur before extending the invitation to the event.
 - Once issued, invites will not be withdrawn except for exceptional content-neutral reasons.

Recommendation 10:

Establish clear processes for responding to highly emotional or charged incidents.

Key finding:

An invitation for free expression and diverse views on campus is likely to cause moments of emotional distress for people in our community; committing to hearing people out without sanction comes with the responsibility to care for one another and to seek to understand the impact of highly emotional incidents on our community.

Specific guidance:

- The School will not punish, censor, or otherwise coerce speech that doesn't violate Harvard policy, even if speech makes people uncomfortable.
- Nonetheless, reasonable effort should be made to support members of our community who are aggrieved by others' speech.
- Identify a subcommittee of the Standing Committee that, in coordination with the Office for Community and Belonging, reflects on recent events, and which over time develops recommendations to help harmonize the dual goals of inclusivity and open debate on campus, such as by clarifying a process for when and how highly charged incidents can be brought to attention for greater understanding and discussion.
 - Develop guidance on how we educate or train our community on what constitutes acceptable vigorous debate, what crosses the line into policy violation (e.g., harassment or discrimination), and what approaches enable free expression while being aware and conscientious of others.
- Develop messaging approaches after highly charged incidents that anchor the communication in empathy, pluralism, and the School's mission.
- Develop a cultural norm that resources are offered at events that may be charged or difficult (e.g., making a person available or "on call"; partnering with the Office of Student Affairs, Office

for Community and Belonging, Ombuds Office, and Harvard University Counseling and Mental Health Services for added supports).

Recommendation 11:

Seek new opportunities for constructive engagement on population health throughout society.

Key finding:

Trust between individuals and institutions is essential for achieving population health and has been declining in recent years. To build confidence in science, public health, and public leadership, the School should prioritize understanding the underlying concerns of people whose trust has been declining, contribute to the building of evidence and theory about trust in science and public health, and create opportunities to repair and build trust for the future.

Specific Guidance:

- Delegate responsibility to a leader in the School for developing a strategy, in conversation with the School and experts in these topics both internally and externally, for how the School can maximally contribute to building trust and constructive engagement in public health. This may include focused speakers on this topic; seeking funding for interdisciplinary research collaborations across the School on trust, communication, and engagement; and developing new curricular opportunities for students that address constructive engagement and trust in the field.

Communicating about this Working Group Report

The findings from this Working Group and specific recommendations should be considered as a living document that can and should be updated with feedback from the broader community over time. It is our hope that these recommendations spur meaningful conversations that further our culture of constructive engagement.

To communicate these recommendations and spur conversations, we suggest first an internal rollout, which includes gathering feedback and updating from our community. The list below provides examples of internal stakeholder and governance groups; it is not exhaustive, and specific considerations may vary by stakeholder group. To support this engagement, we recommend developing approachable, simplified materials and infographics to show examples (including positive ones to emulate) and describe the key ideas in our approach. Presenting at the fall faculty meeting:

1. Guided conversations promoted for all department/administrative unit meetings (where chairs/administrative leaders facilitate discussions with their faculty/teams about what this means for them and gather input)
2. Presenting drafts for input to other relevant bodies: alumni council, CEP, the Steering Committees for the MPH, DrPH, SM, and PhD programs

After gathering this input and updating as needed, the recommendations should be shared more broadly, including in a town hall, presenting to student and postdoc focus groups for feedback, with Harvard peer schools, and making high-level elements available to the public and detailed elements for download behind Harvard Key. The Working Group members ask that they be consulted about the communication plan prior to sharing the recommendations or report outside of Harvard Chan School.

Conclusion

We affirm that constructive engagement is central to the aims of academic freedom, excellence, inclusivity, and community well-being. It is also central to the work of public health. The recommendations in this report seek to spur constructive engagement that advances knowledge that is grounded in evidence and research, that supports our mission, and that upholds our values of dignity and justice for all. Constructive engagement is a skill that must be taught, practiced, and reinforced. We recognize that mistakes will be made, and the work of pluralism can be uncomfortable. Fostering viewpoint diversity, open inquiry, and constructive engagement is not the responsibility of a single committee, office, or School leader. It is a shared commitment across leadership, faculty, staff, and students, and one that must be lived daily.

Working Group Membership

Committee Co-Chairs:

Jennifer Betancourt, Director of Educational Policy, Office of Educational Programs

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Sub-group topics:

- Framework for approaching Constructive Engagement
- Communication & School Climate
- Schoolwide programming, engagement, and skill-building
- Curricular skill-building and partnerships

Acknowledgment

The Working Group gratefully acknowledges the contributions of other individuals who reviewed this report and provided valuable feedback. Their insights and suggestions have strengthened the clarity and completeness of this work.

Appendix

Exhibit 1: Documents and Sources Reviewed by the Working Group

University-Wide Initiatives & Reports	Harvard-wide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University–Office of the Provost Report on Open Inquiry and Constructive Dialogue • Presidential Task Force on Combating Anti-Muslim, Anti-Arab, and Anti-Palestinian Bias • Presidential Task Force on Combatting Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israel Bias • University Community Values Other Harvard Schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKS WG Report • HBS WG Report • FAS WG Report • HKS Candid & Constructive Conversations & Constructive Conversations
Chan School Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvard Chan LEADS Initiative • Learning to LEAD orientation slide deck • LEADs' Community Message referencing HKS module • LEADs' Communication: Fostering constructive conversations across differences _HSPH 6.24.pdf • Calling to Public Health Orientation Session – 90 minutes (storytelling/practice of public health) • Harvard Chan Principles of Citizenship, Mission and Vision • ODI Building Community of Inclusive Excellence • Admissions Viewbook • Harvard Chan School Studio Programs • Harvard Chan School Website • Harvard Chan Engage
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Syllabi • Teaching Fellow Training Website • Faculty Peer Workshops
Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University-wide Open Inquiry and Constructive Engagement Group • Colleagues from HGSE, HKS, and HM