

JMU Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue

Vision

We seek to create a world that engages in dialogue and deliberation across differences as a cultural norm and as an effective tool for addressing the challenges and opportunities of civic life.

Mission

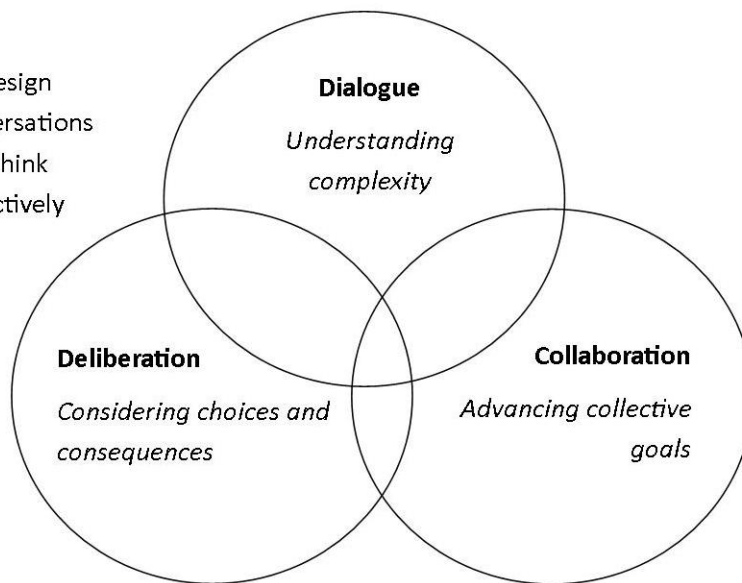
To inspire dialogue and deliberation that shapes engaged and inclusive communities and informs sound policies.

We do this by:

- creating spaces where exploring values and tensions can transform communities for collaborative public problem solving.
- training students, campus, and community members to build capacity for productive talk.
- grounding this work in and seeking to add to theory and best practices.

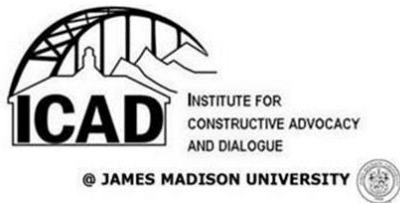
ICAD: Engaging communities and organizations in problem-solving

What we do: Design and guide conversations to help people think together productively



Creating conversations that

Engage
Connect
Sustain



Facilitating Productive Talk

ICAD Year-End Report 2017-2018

Director, Lori L. Britt, Communication Studies
Associate Director, Rob Alexander, Public Policy

Interim Assistant Director, Spring 2018, Katie Lese
ICAD Administrative Intern 2018, Lauren Rowell

Research about the Practice of Dialogue and Deliberation

Publications

Britt, L.L. & Smithberger, L. (2018) Developing a civic identity by designing and facilitating public opportunities for deliberative dialogue. In Soria, K. (ed.) *Educating for Citizenship and Social Justice: Practices for Community Engagement at Research Universities*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. *Competitively* selected book chapter.

Britt, L. L. (2017). National Issues Forum Guides: Eliciting and Habituating Public Judgment. Higher Education Exchange 2017. Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.

Britt, L. L., & Smithberger, L. K. (2017). Collaboration among Bike/walk advocates: Facilitating process or empowering action? In M. G. Izbell & R. G. Heath, *Interorganizational Collaboration: Complexity, ethics and communication*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Conference Presentations

(June, 2018) Transformation by Design: The Integration of Deliberative Talk to Transform Democracy. Britt was a panelist on a workshop presented at the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Conference in Anaheim, CA.

Britt, L. L. (2017, Nov.) A Relevant future: Discussing the Honors basic course. Participant on a competitively selected panel of the Basic Course Division of the National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX.

Britt, L. L. (2017, Nov.) Addressing Complex Problems: A Series of Interconnected Assignments. Presented in the Experiential Learning Discussion Circles, National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX.

Britt, L. L. (2017, Nov.) The Legacy of shaping public talk: National Issues Forums. Analysis of the structural, semantic, and pragmatic evolution of the NIF Issue Guides, 1982-2015. Competitively selected paper presented on a panel of the Public Dialogue and Deliberation Division, National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX.

Britt, L. L., Schaffer, T., Townsend, R., Ruminski, E., and McMillan, J. (2017, Nov.) Using Our Legacy of Dialogic Deliberation as a Foundational Approach to Teaching Communication. A Short course of the National Communication Association Annual Conference, Dallas, TX.

Britt, L. L. (2017, Nov.) Co-designer and moderator of a special presidential panel session on NCA and Polarization, Panel. National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX.

Research in Progress; Upcoming Presentations

How The Past Shapes the Present: Current narratives About Public Problem-Solving and the Past Experiences That Inform Them. Revise and resubmit by Britt and Alexander in progress for the Journal of Public Deliberation.

NASPAA (Oct. 2018) Facilitation and Dialogue: Teaching our students facilitation and dialogue skills in disruptive times Alexander will be on a panel discussing using facilitation classes to teach engagement in an MPA program.

JMU Engagement for the Common Good conference (Nov. 2018). *Supporting Public Participation in Local Government Processes: A Campus and Local Government Partnership*. Britt, Alexander, and three JMU Graduate students will present along with Harrisonburg City staff about their collaboration on the Harrisonburg Comprehensive Planning Process and discuss campus and local governmental partnerships.

NCDD (Nov. 2018) Democracy's Hubs: The Role of Local Centers in Building Capacity for Dialogue and Deliberation. Britt will serve as a workshop presenter at the biennial conference of the National Coalition of Dialogue and Deliberation.

Grants/Fellowships

Shenandoah Valley Facilitators Network Training Workshop – Through a Campus Compact Fund for Positive Engagement grant, Rob Alexander, Amy Knorr (EMU Center for Justice and Peacebuilding), and Lori Britt co-designed and led a full-day training workshop series on the campus of Eastern Mennonite University, targeting community members and students at both JMU and EMU interested in facilitation and facilitated talk as a tool for bridging diverse opinion groups together to collaboratively address difficult issues in our communities.

The workshop day consisted of four different 90 minute workshops that were offered in the morning as well as in the afternoon, allowing participants to attend one or both sessions of their choice. We also convened a working, catered lunch where participants engaged in networking and partnership building. The day ended with an all-group discussion of how a Facilitators Network in the Shenandoah Valley may assist the community work being done by facilitators in our region.

Alexander co-led a workshop with a JMU undergraduate student on the topic of 'Pop-Up Dialogue', or the idea that facilitators can be on call to provide spontaneous dialogue facilitation when an event happens such as a rally, a speaker, or even by catching people together in a public space such as the Farmer's Market or the Valley Mall. Britt co-led a workshop with a former graduate student on 'Living Our Democratic Ideals in Organizations.'

The grant also allowed us to convene this newly-emerging network in the spring. The *Shenandoah Valley Facilitators Network Community Conversation* convened students and community members interested in facilitation for public dialogue to discuss the explicit and implicit bias inherent to the processes of convening, process design, and facilitation that may create participation barriers for mini-publics within our communities.

Playing a Role in a National Network of Dialogue, Deliberation and Collaborative Governance

Interactivity Foundation 'How Will Public Discussion Survive?' – Early in the fall semester, Britt and Alexander traveled to the Newseum at the invitation of the Interactivity Foundation (<https://www.interactivityfoundation.org/about-if/>) to participate in an event called 'How Will Public Discussion Survive?' where IF convened 60 or so community leaders and facilitators from the D.C. area to come together and address that question. Data from the event was published by IF and the Newseum on their websites and in social media. See <https://www.interactivityfoundation.org/partners-newseum-institute/>.

Kettering Foundation – Britt is again serving in a multi-year role as a Faculty Member for the Kettering Foundation's Centers for Public Life program which helps to create and sustain campus and community based centers of civic life.

Supporting Innovation in Practice – Shortly after the protest events in Charlottesville, VA revolving around confederate monuments, Britt and Alexander responded to a call in the regional dialogue and deliberation community to participate in an experimental pop-up dialogue on the pedestrian mall in Charlottesville to offer community members a chance to talk with others about what their concerns and hopes for the community were in light of these events.

Designing and Facilitating Campus-Based Dialogue, Deliberation and Collaboration Projects

Academic Council Process Design – At the request of two members of Academic Council we consulted with the Provost and made recommendations for the facilitation of the first Academic Council daylong retreat of the year. Objectives included setting new communication norms, affirming the purpose of the Council, and discuss strategic and operational issues facing the Council.

Helping Honors Student Experience Deliberation - SCOM 447 (Undergraduate Facilitation Course) students facilitated a National Issues Forum deliberation in the Honors SCOM 123 lectures on the issue of "Political Fix: How do we get our American political system back on track?"

JMU Libraries and Educational Technology - Facilitated two focus groups/faculty input sessions for the Libraries and Educational Technologies division to understand what services are valuable to faculty in their roles and teachers and researchers and what they need from LET to meet changing needs.

Outriggers Facilitation Training – ICAD led a workshop for the student organization on dealing with the challenges of the Facilitation process.

Phi Beta Kappa Freedom of Expression Dialogue – At the request of Linda Halpern and in collaboration with Abe Goldberg, ICAD designed a dialogue process for the fall Phi Beta Kappa meeting where participants viewed a livestream of a panel discussion on Freedom of Expression and then engaged in the facilitated discussion.

SPIA Symposium NIFI 'Fixing Politics' Deliberative Forum – As ICAD, we participated in the Spring Symposium by hosting a deliberative forum on 'Fixing Politics' utilizing an issue guide from the National Issues Forum Institute. Two JMU students served as the small group facilitators and we had approximately 20 participants. After reviewing three possible paths for addressing the partisan divide in our current political culture, participants deliberated on how to integrating these paths and generating additional ideas.

Designing and Facilitating Community-Based Dialogue, Deliberation and Collaboration Projects

Renew Rocktown Strategic Planning – Working with an SCOM graduate student on whose project committee I served, we designed and implemented a full day strategic planning retreat for Renew Rocktown, a Harrisonburg-based climate advocacy group connected to the community organization, Vine and Fig. The retreat focused on the facilitation of dialogue about the group’s vision and mission to generate actionable goals for the calendar year.

City of Harrisonburg Comprehensive Planning - Two SCOM 447 student teams worked to facilitate public input on two sections of the Comprehensive Plan for the city on Arts and Education, and on Parks and Infrastructure. This was part of the total Comprehensive Planning Process for which ICAD partnered with the City of Harrisonburg. An ICAD undergraduate student intern was involved in designing the process and ICAD affiliates facilitated the sessions on Land Use and Community Development.

Rockingham Education Foundation – SCOM 447 students conducted three input sessions/focus groups for the Rockingham Educational Foundation to gain insight on what people know about REFI, what programs are working well, what programs are underutilized, and gain creative ideas for how to ensure this community resource is well known to school faculty, community members and businesses, parents and students.

Harrisonburg Trauma-Informed Community Network – SCOM 447 students facilitated a community discussion with over 100 people about a new initiative to make Harrisonburg a Trauma-Informed Community.

Harrisonburg/Rockingham Bike-Walk Summit – ICAD continued its longitudinal support of the Summit, an annual collaborative effort by the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition and the Shenandoah Valley Planning District Commission to bring together key decision-makers, public administrators, university employees, and bicycling/walking enthusiasts to discuss ways to improve biking and walking in the City and the County. This commitment starts in January and continues through November when the Summit occurs. This year ICAD Associate Director Rob Alexander designed the process and worked with four SCOM undergraduate students, two MPA students, and three ICAD Affiliates to train them into the process design. In 2017, the Summit theme focused upon retrofitting street infrastructure through community planning and design.

Town of Woodstock Rails to Trails Committee – ICAD Associate Director Rob Alexander served as the planning facilitator for the Town of Woodstock Rails to Trails Committee, consulting with the Committee Chair to discuss objectives for the next meeting, after which he designed and facilitated a process for meeting those objectives.

United Way ALICE Community Conversation – The United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County asked ICAD to design and implement a ‘community conversation’ about the local ALICE population or ‘Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed’ population. This project involved graduate students from PUAD 627 in process design and involved additional MPA and EMU graduate students as facilitators. (See <http://www.whsv.com/content/news/Community-leaders-discuss-struggling-families-in-the-valley-476857373.html>)

City of Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation Strategic Planning – ICAD commenced a strategic planning cycle with the Parks and Rec department mapped to the school year schedule. The purpose of this plan was to guide internal shifts of both operational and cultural changes. This project involved two MPA students who initially shadowed the work of Associate Director Rob Alexander and then, during the spring semester, took leads on the project as part of their work for PUAD 627: Facilitating Collaborative Governance. In addition, the project utilized another MPA student and two undergraduate students as facilitators for the all-Department and open house meetings.

Way to Go Strategic Planning – Graduate students from PUAD 627 designed and implemented a strategic planning retreat for the Way To Go board. Students also served as the primary facilitators.

Virginia Green – ICAD worked with Brenda Black, Tourism Director for the City of Harrisonburg, in developing a local chapter of Virginia Green, a statewide green certification program for the travel and tourism industry. This group met three times over the course of the school year to express interests and concerns for a potential local chapter. Attendees included representatives from the City of Harrisonburg Public Works, Hotel Madison, Bella Luna, PediCab, Marriott Hotels, Aramark JMU, and Bring Your Own.