

WHAT DO STUDENTS SAY ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

"BUILDING BRIDGES IS AN EXCELLENT IDEA. I HAVE BEEN REACHED. I LOOKED AT MYSELF AND SAW MY BELIEFS AND STEREOTYPES. I THOUGHT THE DISCUSSION WAS VERY THOUGHT PROVOKING. THANK YOU FOR COMING TO OUR CLASS. PLEASE CONTINUE THE WONDERFUL WORK."



"I BELIEVE THE PROGRAM IS VERY POSITIVE. THE ISSUES COVERED WERE NOT ONLY BLACK AND WHITE, BUT THEY WERE PEOPLE ISSUES. I WILL LEAVE THIS CLASS WITH A GOOD HEART IN HOPES OF DOING WHAT WAS DISCLOSED."

"I LOVE BUILDING BRIDGES. I THINK IT GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK ABOUT THINGS IN A GROUP SETTING THAT ARE UNEASY TO DISCUSS IN SOCIETY."

"BUILDING BRIDGES IS AN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS."

"IT WAS VERY INTERESTING AND COOL TO DEBATE EDUCATIONALLY."



THE BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM OFFICE OF MINORITY STUDENT SERVICES

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BUILDING BRIDGES



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THE BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM

What is the purpose?

The purpose of the Building Bridges Program is to establish a collaborative initiative between the academic and student affairs that serves to facilitate communication and collaboration between university students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and create a student and academic affairs partnership that integrates students' in-class and out-of-class experiences.

We are committed to improving relations between students, helping them grow personally, and preparing our students for living and working in diverse communities.



How does the program work?

Each semester, the multi-ethnic team of student associates visits classrooms to share their personal experiences, relative to race issues and cultural diversity, and lead discussions about intergroup relations with their peers. In addition, they facilitate discussion at high schools and outside organizations. Topics may include: interracial dating, minority scholarships, segregation, affirmative action, Black History Month, and the effects of media on racism. The result is a lively discussion that produces a different perspective for many students. By all accounts, the intergroup dialogue, within the context of the classroom, has met with measurable success since its inception ten years ago.

Who are the associates?

Student associates come from all backgrounds—Asian, African American, Latino, Native American, Euro American and International. Associates are selected through an interview process and receive ongoing training over the course of the year in effective listening, nondefensive communication of feelings, creating an open and supportive atmosphere, and handling difficult group members.

Student associates participate in the program because they see a need to improve cultural diversity and want to be part of the solution. They commit their time, talent, and energy to building a program that will have an impact on their lives as well as the lives of others.

How do I get involved?

STUDENTS:

- become a student associate,
- request your professors invite a team of associates into your classes, and
- attend open discussion sessions scheduled outside of classes.

FACULTY:

- invite a team of associates into your classes,
- poll your students for questions
- encourage your students to continue dialogue outside of classes.



SESSIONS ARE ALSO OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOLS AND OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS.



What can you expect to happen?

- Structured opportunities for dialogue about racial and ethnic stereotypes with members of representative minority groups.
- Provision of a framework for meaningful interaction between minority and majority students.
- Increased understanding of the relationship between valuing diversity and personal and professional success as well as the success of our economy.
- Decreased misunderstanding, conflict, suffering, and distress among members of different groups.
- Reduction of feelings of alienation on the part of minority students.
- Increased involvement of majority students in the academic and social life of minority students.
- Increased involvement by minority students in the academic and social life of majority students.
- Reinforcement that all students are responsible for creating a positive and comfortable climate for the diversity of individuals enrolled at Clarion.
- Development of critical thinking skills through reflection on personal values and examination of ethical issues.