



American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley:

Hosting a Dialogue

As a part of its work to engage Senior Fellows (SF) in meaningful dialogues following graduation from the Fellows program, we wanted to provide a guide to SF that are looking to host a dialogue with their ALF class or members of the larger network. These dialogues may be in response to larger issues happening in our world and may connect to larger initiatives that ALF is engaging in.

ALF staff is willing to support and assist you in your thinking of the setting up any conversation with your class. Feel free to contact Jenny Niklaus at jniklaus@alfsv.org for guidance and support.

Step One: Set-up the meeting

You may want to work with two to three other folks in your class to determine a location and time that works for your class. Generally we find that classes tend to want to meet around food and drink. Breakfast, lunch or immediately following work seem to be the best times.

Step Two: Send the invite

Invite your class to attend. Here is a sample invite text to use or edit as you see fit:

“The issue of ... has become a significant one within our community. I miss seeing you all and would welcome the chance to be in conversation with you about this topic. This time will not only be a great chance for us to “check-in” and connect, it will allow us to have a deep conversation about (insert topic).

I have included below some possible days and times, so hoping that you will be able to make it!”

Step Three: Host the dialogue

Below is a suggested format for the dialogue. You know your class and how long they will need to move through each area of the conversation. This will also change based on the number of people in attendance. It may be helpful to ask someone to monitor the time.

Generally we would suggest breaking the conversation in the following ways:

- **Welcome and silence (5 minutes)**
 - Ask folks to get comfortable and begin the silence. 2-3 minutes suggested. Ring the bell to begin and to end. If you don't have a bell, you can use a timer on your phone or a meditation app if you have one.

- **Check-in (20-30 minutes)**
 - After the closing bell for silence, welcome folks to check-in.



- Many classes do long check-ins when it has been awhile since the class has been together. It is up to you to regulate that at whatever level you wish and you can begin this check-in process by asking folks to keep it to 2-3 minutes each.
- **Dialogue (45-60 minutes)**
 - Introduce the subject for conversation, the big question, thought, event or issue that prompted the gathering.
 - Generally the conversation can just flow from that point. You may need to step in occasionally as a bystander to comment on the process.
- **Reflection and Check-out (10-20 minutes)**
 - Often this step is skipped because the dialogue has run too long and folks need to go. Try to allow time for people to do a quick 60 second check-out/reflection from the dialogue.

Step Five: Reflect

- Take a moment to send to Jenny Niklaus a brief summary and thoughts from the meeting including the following:
 - What was the nature of the dialogue?
 - What were the large topic areas?
 - Were there opportunities discussed that ALF may want to follow-up on?
 - How was your experience in leading the dialogue?