

Bridging Divides: Techniques for Productive Governing

September 14, 2022

ON-LINE – 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

How can local elected officials facilitate conversations about the issues that matter most to our state in such a divisive political atmosphere? In many ways, citizens now gravitate towards a “we-they” society. For local government officials the fall-out can be personal and community healing can be difficult.

Rather than continuing to frame issues around opposition language, bringing people together for open discussion about differences of opinion is possible, and can be productive when framed around common values and respect for our shared history.

This class provides a framework for hearing diverse political perspectives and creating productive conversations about important policy issues that matter to North Carolina’s communities. You will learn how to think about the points of difference and shared values between North Carolinians on opposing sides of the divisive issues around our shared history.

In this class, you will learn the following effective leadership skills:

- Respecting differences of opinions: framing divisive issues in a way that respects legitimate differences in opinion—while avoiding a “villain/victim” narrative.
- Listening to diverse points of view: practicing techniques for engaging in and managing these kinds of difficult conversations.
- Thinking about and sharing ways to move forward in the context of those differences.

Instructor Christian O. Lundberg, of the UNC Department of Communications, is also a Consulting Principal with *Vocable Communications*. He has more than 15 years’ experience in debate coaching, public persuasion, and analysis of public and political speech.

AGENDA

9:00	Who are you? Who am I? What’s the problem? What’s our goal?
9:30	Small group exercise and Scenario: Jumping into a Hot Topic Discussion: What outcome do you want?
10:15	Break
10:30	Techniques for Speaking/Facilitating Difficult Conversations
11:00	Small group exercise: Redoing a Tough Conversation
11:30	Discussion and Reflections on the Exercise
12:00	Wrap-up