

- I would like to begin by recognizing the faculty committee that has evolved and developed the concept for the program we are presenting today. The initial draft they inherited originated from a committee of only two people, charged by Chancellor Folt to create a concept for a program that she named The Center for American Values and Civil Discourse.
- This committee's unanimous opinion about that draft and variants of it was that it had some good features, but overall it did not describe a program that would work on our campus. So they set to work to improve it, explicitly rejecting any political ideology in favor of a belief in the power of the university as a place for socializing debate and democratic culture. They have crafted a vision for a Uniquely Carolina program we are calling The Program for Public Discourse.
- The members of the committee are Professor Donna Gilleskie of Economics, Professor Molly Worthen, of History, Professor Sarah Truel of Political Science, who could not join us today, Professor Chris Lundberg of Communication, Professor Larry Grossberg of Communication, and Professor Rich Myers of Law, who has been nominated to be a United States District Judge and has stepped down from the committee.
- I want you to hear from some of these faculty so I will make some very quick points and turn the meeting over to them.
- First, I think it is indisputable that discourse in this country is broken. Whatever the cause of this, Carolina is uniquely suited to address the problem, and I believe it is our responsibility as a public institution to do so. We start from a good position, we are launching a new general education curriculum approved by the Faculty Council last spring. This curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing capacities like discourse and civic participation, not in one class or subject area, but across all subject areas. We are fortunate to have faculty who possess deep expertise in these capacities, and students who are eager to work with us to restore public discourse that is robust, meaningful, and polite.

- Second, the program does not seek to change or alter the approved IDEAs in Action curriculum structure in any way. It does not call for any new degree, certificate, curriculum, major, or minor of its own, but rather seeks to support any faculty for any course that explicitly incorporates structured advocacy, argumentation, and debate. Support will come both from incentives and infrastructure such as course development grants, faculty workshops, faculty learning communities, and perhaps graduate communication consultants. Participation in the Program is optional for faculty, and any courses developed or enhanced with Program support will be reviewed for approval by the administrative boards of the general college and the College of Arts and Sciences Course Committee. Those are the bodies with the ordinary authority to approve general education courses developed by Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences.
- We are fortunate to have initial support for these efforts in the form of a million dollar seed fund from a private donor. I should note that neither I nor any of the faculty on this committee have met the donor, though I am hopeful I can do so soon to thank him for his gift.
- Third, I want to emphasize that although we are here to speak, we are also here to listen. These conversations today will help us make the program better, and there will be more conversations in roundtables convened under the leadership of Interim Dean Terry Rhodes. An initial goal of these conversations will be to solicit feedback on the proposal and take stock of existing strengths we can draw on.
- We will not be ready to go forward with support for curricular capacities until we understand what expertise, methods, and capacities are already here to be drawn upon, and what new infrastructure needs to be built to support a broad culture of debate, argument, and discourse at Carolina. I will end by thanking the committee for their all-volunteer work, which was at times intense. I look forward to the next round of conversations about the program.
- Now I will turn it over to Professor Chris Lundberg who will say more about the program and its objectives.