

THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Civil Public Discourse



Recognizing that civil public discourse is a fundamental element of collaborative public policy, the Center is exploring the current status of civil discourse in the state, region and nation. The Center seeks to understand how it compares to other periods of history, what effects this is having on policy processes, and what the Center and other organizations can do to improve the climate.

Another important element of the Center's efforts to promote civil discourse and build capacity for collaborative policy is providing training in collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution and building long-term working relationships.

For more information on the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, please visit our web site at: RuckelshausCenter.wsu.edu

The Ruckelshaus Center has conducted the following activities related to civil public discourse, partnering with other organizations focusing on this important subject in the state, region and nation (more information available from the Center's website).

- Held workshops to assist newly-elected state legislators with the transition from candidate to legislator.
- Bill Ruckelshaus published an op-ed in the Seattle Times in 2011 entitled *What Citizens Should Require to Restore Trust in Government*, concluding that it requires decisive leaders who eschew partisanship in favor of collaborative approaches.
- Hosted a training in 2011 on how to moderate a Kettering Foundation National Issue Forum Dialogue. Co-hosted a Kettering Dialogue forum on the national debt with a UW Evans School of Public Policy and Governance student group.
- Devoted its 2012 Chairman's Circle Luncheon to renowned author and political commentator Ronald Brownstein discussing "Civil Discourse in an Era of Hyper-Partisanship," and his book *The Second Civil War – How Extreme Partisanship has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America*.
- Provided trainings in 2012 to help Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife habitat biologists manage interactions and relationships with permit applicants, while providing protection for fish and their habitat.
- Co-sponsored a 2012 conference hosted by the American Society for Public Administration and the UW Evans School in entitled *Civil Discourse to Resolve Governmental Crises*.
- Served as a partnering sponsor for the 2012 & 2014 Conferences of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD).
- Teamed in 2012 with the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University (PSU) to provide collaboration training to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Aquatics Division.
- Joined with Oregon Consensus at PSU to train the Columbia River Gorge Commission on how to communicate more effectively and work more collaboratively.
- Provided communications, conflict resolution and consensus-seeking training to incoming students participating in The Evergreen State College's 2013 Civic Engagement Institute.



William D. Ruckelshaus Center

121 Hulbert Hall | 901 Fifth Avenue
PO Box 646248 | Suite 2900
Pullman, WA 99164 | Seattle, WA 98164
(509) 335-2937 | (206) 428-3021
RuckelshausCenter@wsu.edu
<http://RuckelshausCenter.wsu.edu>

WSU Extension and UW Evans School of Public Policy and Governance programs and employment are available to all without discrimination.

- Moderated sessions at the 2013 Association for Conflict Resolution Environment and Public Policy section's conference and the 2014 NCDD conference on building bridges between collaborative policy, civil discourse, and deliberative democracy.
- Co-promoted a 2013 panel discussion entitled *Civil Discourse: Moving to the Heart of the Matter* with Seattle's CityClub, the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, Community Forums Network, Washington Women's Foundation, and others.
- Devoted the 2013 Ruckelshaus Center Chairman's Circle luncheon to former Senator Alan Simpson discussing his bipartisan proposals for addressing America's fiscal situation.
- Supported (with the Washington State Governor's and Secretary of State's offices) WSU research on civility among current and former Washington state legislators, staff and lobbyists. This includes sponsoring the 2013 and 2014 Washington Governance Series in Olympia, Seattle and Spokane featuring the Secretary of State, Governor's Office, and panels of current and former legislators.
- Devoted the 2014 Ruckelshaus Center Chairman's Circle luncheon to former Prime Minister Tony Blair discussing the challenges and opportunities of global leadership.
- Co-sponsored—along with the Council of State Governments, Seattle CityClub, National Institute for Civil Discourse, and Henry M. Jackson Foundation—2013 and 2015 skills-building workshops for Washington State legislators entitled *Building Trust through Civil Discourse in the Legislative Arena*.
- Co-hosted—with the Slade Gorton International Policy Center—2013 and 2014 events on *Statesmanship* (featuring former Congressman Norm Dicks, Governor Dan Evans, Senator Slade Gorton, and Bill Ruckelshaus) and *Stateswomanship* (featuring Phyllis Campbell, former U.S. Attorney Jenny Durkan, Governor Christine Gregoire, and WA Secretary of State Kim Wyman). Event co-sponsors included the Evans School, Henry M. Jackson Foundation, Kongsgaard Goldman Foundation, Van Ness Feldman LLP, The Seattle Foundation, and K&L Gates LLP.
- In 2014, co-promoted a Seattle CityClub event entitled *Working Across the Aisle* with U.S. Representatives Dave Reichert (R-8th, WA) and Derek Kilmer (D-6th, WA).
- In 2014, presented facilitation training at the Community Development Extension Institute in Boise, Idaho.