

# Elon University Dialogue Experience Guide

## Cost of Living and Affordable Housing



| What is Dialogue?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | What is Dialogue at Elon?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| Dialogue is a process that brings people together to share their perspectives and lived experiences around meaningful and sometimes challenging social issues. Through open and respectful conversation, participants are invited to explore different viewpoints, deepen understanding, and strengthen their ability to live, learn, and work collaboratively across difference. | At Elon, dialogue reflects our commitment to fostering an inclusive community where every voice is valued, and learning extends beyond the classroom. It helps dispel stereotypes, cultivate empathy, and inspire both personal growth and collective action for a more just and connected world. Dialogue encourages participants to engage thoughtfully, challenge ideas without dismissing others’ beliefs, and build trust across diverse backgrounds. |

### What Will Participants Experience During a Dialogue?

Through participating in a dialogue opportunity, participants will:



Listen and communicate with openness and respect



Reflect critically on personal and social identities



Collaborate effectively across difference



Transform understanding into action

### Dialogue Ground Rules

Dialogue participants are asked to consider utilizing these ground rules:

- Listen with curiosity to better understand
  - Speak to each other and not just the moderator
  - Treat participants in this dialogue as equal, regardless of position
  - Learn from one another by asking questions
  - Respect the views of others
- Speak from your own experiences
  - Approach ideas through a lens of curiosity instead of hostility
  - Critique ideas and not individuals
  - Remember that stories stay and lessons leave
  - Give permission to allow everyone to “speak in draft”

## Dialogue Process

1. Each participant should introduce themselves to the group by sharing their first name.
2. Ask one participant to read the ***What is Dialogue?*** text aloud to the group.
3. Ask one participant to read the ***What is Dialogue at Elon?*** text aloud to the group.
4. Ask one or two participants to read the ***Dialogue Ground Rules*** text aloud to the group.  
Ask if there are any questions or recommended changes.
5. One participant should read this paragraph aloud to frame the conversation:

In early 2026, the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) at Tufts University published an article outlining 25 things they learned about young voters in 2024 and 2025. Their research found that cost of living/inflation was the top issue on the minds of voters ages 18-34. While this may be surprising to some, it was named as a top issue more than twice as often as topics like healthcare, climate change and immigration.

The Urban Institute, a nonprofit research organization based in Washington, D.C., publishes an American Affordability Tracker. Some of the tracker's most recent data shows that nearly 50 percent of American families do not have the resources needed to cover essential expenses to live safely in their community. Meanwhile, the average home sale price has skyrocketed to \$486,000, and average monthly rent in the United States is \$1,890.

### 7. Work through the following questions as a group:

- What concerns you the most about the current cost of living in the United States?
- How is the current cost of living impacting your thoughts on your future career and where you want to live?
- What does affordable housing mean to you?
- What could be possible solutions/pathways to making the United States a more affordable place to live for all people?
- What are your future goals related to housing and what seem to be the biggest obstacles to achieving these goals?

### 8. Each participant should answer one of these concluding questions:

**As a result of this dialogue, what is one insight that you are taking away or one action that you can commit to?**

**As a result of this dialogue, are you currently optimistic or pessimistic about the topic and why?**