

Make Shift Coffee House

2017/18 Comments



The following comments were made at our old website in 2017 and 2018.

I'm one of the student organizers of an event which we hosted as part of a regular Bowdoin discussion series on interesting and controversial issues. I think partnering with Make Shift and having community members at this event made it the best one we have had by far!

Sometimes at Bowdoin, campus wide discussions about important issues feel too much like class discussions, theoretical and impersonal. Sharing in a group with community members that don't attend Bowdoin made our discussion more grounded in our experiences rather than vague academic ideas; we shared personal stories that have led us to think what we do, and heard many real-life examples of concepts. Students also crave hearing the perspectives of local Mainers, as Bowdoin is a very different place from the rest of Maine, and many of us have a lot to learn about where we are. Talking about geographical differences and how place might shape morality was fascinating with these groups.

Craig was a fantastic facilitator, listening deeply and facilitating connections between and among students and community members. A huge thank you to Make Shift Coffee House for coming to Bowdoin! - Sydney Avitia-Jacques

Many thanks to Craig and the organizers of the evening! I thought it was extremely useful and an excellent example of how it is possible to "talk across the divide". It has provided me with a specific example to describe to other groups and friends as to how we can do this "work" together and its importance. The questions were right on target and it seemed to particularly helpful that Craig asked each speaker to describe the source of his/her beliefs and ideas. - Anne Jackson

It was gratifying to attend the Make Shift Coffee House. I think that this forum was well suited to provide attendees with a chance to listen, and to provide comment about the political issues and the growing divide. I hope that this kind of get-together will be repeated in other places, but also again in our area, so that we can begin to create connections across the middle of the political spectrum. Many thanks to the organizers for providing the venue, and to our moderator who did a great job facilitating discussion. -Frank Oliva

I thought it was worthwhile and challenging to speak and listen rather than demonize. The surface was scratched, but I have a lot more listening to do. Where to go from here?
-Doug Poulin

Thanks Craig, for a very engaging evening! We really need to find a way to understand one another better so that we can create solutions that are “better than the sum of their parts.” This is such important work that you are doing. I’m looking forward to attending as many ‘Coffee Houses’ as I can. -Lindsay Kirk

I loved the opportunity to interact with people whose views I often wonder about. I don’t normally have the opportunity/time to chat with folks from a different viewpoint in a meaningful way. This is essential because we must work together. -Nancy Jacobson

I learned much from this evening and am so glad that folks had an opportunity to sit in the same room, respectfully listening to people with differing opinions. Friendships and families have become strained and even broken over politics from this past season in a way that I haven’t seen in my lifetime.

Craig modeled a way for passionate people to have a conversation for the purpose of understanding rather than for the purpose of persuading. The voices were rational and educated, intelligent and thoughtful - not reduced to oversimplified caricatures. Opportunities for small group discussions came before and after the whole group discussion. Thank you to everyone’s generous participation...especially those courageous ones who were in the political minority. -Cicy Po

I very much enjoyed this event. I particularly appreciated the eloquence and civility with which differing opinions were expressed throughout the night. Additionally, I found Craig’s calm yet insightful moderating strategy refreshing in this turbulent political climate. Overall, I found this first Make Shift Coffee House to be incredibly eye-opening. I hope to attend another one in the future! -Emma Schwartz

The number of attenders and the heartfelt words shared at this first Make Shift Coffee House was encouraging. I appreciated hearing different views and getting a better sense of the reasons behind voting choices. But this felt like a beginning. Either the beginning of small group, informal conversations or more Make Shift Coffee Houses around the state or both. Hopefully at least the individual conversations. -Martha Hinshaw Sheldon