



Sway for Orientation

LEARNING THROUGH DISAGREEMENT

Connect Incoming Students Before They Arrive on Campus

WHAT IS SWAY?

Sway is an educational chat platform that pairs students who disagree into one-on-one, text-based conversations about discussion topics chosen by their instructor or program. Students share their opinions on these topics, and Sway aims to match each student with a peer who holds a different perspective. Students then chat synchronously or asynchronously on their phones or laptops.

An AI facilitator called Guide joins every conversation: it can pose challenging questions, surface implicit assumptions, de-escalate tense moments, and provide relevant information—without ever taking sides. When a student writes something unconstructive, Sway suggests a better way to make the same point, providing real-time coaching in clear, respectful communication.

From the humanities to STEM, more than 10,000 students at over 90 institutions have used Sway to practice constructive disagreement. No extra staff time, facilitator training, or coordination is required. After each discussion, Sway delivers anonymized reports to instructors/staff on how student positions evolved and how well students understood each other's reasoning. Sway is grant-funded and provided to students and educators for free.

WHAT DOES SWAY OFFER FOR ORIENTATION?

The idea: this summer, pair every incoming student with a future classmate who sees the world differently—and let Sway guide the conversation. Students participate from anywhere, on their own schedule, before they ever set foot on campus.

Sway's asynchronous, text-based format is built for a dispersed incoming class, and the experience lands reliably: across institutions, 92% of students feel comfortable sharing their honest opinions—even with a stranger who disagrees—and it's fun: 79% rate their experience as awesome or good. On move-in day, students will already share a real experience with a classmate who sees the world differently.

WHAT DO CAMPUS LEADERS LEARN?

Sway provides administrators with rich, de-identified data on the incoming class—before orientation even begins:

- Where do our incoming students discover common ground?
- Where do they persistently disagree?
- What arguments do they find convincing?

After each conversation, Sway delivers anonymized reports on how student positions evolved and how well students understood each other, alongside responses to customizable surveys. Survey items can be tailored to questions from orientation planners, residential life, and other campus stakeholders.

What Makes Sway Unique?

Incoming students already connect over the summer—but through social media and affinity groups that can reinforce existing bubbles. Sway pairs students *across* differences for a structured conversation focused on reasoning, not likes. No facilitators, TAs, or training needed. Funded by grants and offered free, with 100+ more campuses launching in 2026. Most programs teach students *about* constructive disagreement; Sway gives every student hands-on, structured *practice*.

[Chronicle of Higher Ed Coverage →](#)

Privacy & Security

- Conversations are encrypted and private by default
- School staff never see individual transcripts or know which student said what
- Student data is never used to train commercial AI models
- Research participation is opt-in; students can delete their accounts at any time

[Read our privacy policy →](#)

Bring Sway to your orientation program. [Book a 20-minute demo](#) to learn more.

www.swaybeta.ai · Developed with [Heterodox Academy](#) · Funded by [Arthur Vining Davis Foundations](#)