

Tips for Getting College Students Involved in Political Action

Getting started

- Gather a small group and brainstorm a list of topics/ideas you are passionate about or interested in learning more about or taking some type of action.
- Research the issues, talk to friends or others interested in getting involved, and build a coalition—there is strength in numbers!
- Possible ideas/topics (and useful websites):
 - Darfur genocide (link to Rwandan genocide-*Hotel Rwanda* is a good film for starting points)
 - Wal-Mart education (www.walmartwatch.com or www.wakeupwalmart.com or www.lcwr.org/lcwrpublications/resolutionstoaction/Resolutions%20to%20Action%20June%202004.pdf)
 - School of the Americas (www.soaw.org)
 - Fair trade education (www.crsfairtrade.org) and hold a fair trade festival sale (www.tenthousandvillages.com)
 - Sweatshops (www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org)
 - Recycling and environmental justice (www.coopamerica.org)

Staying Active

- Many people coming together can share the workload and keep up the passion and motivation!
- Keep each other active—plan regular meetings for a time that is most convenient for a large majority of students.
- Break off into smaller groups if it will help with planning and carrying out goals.
- Chances are there will be a range of involvement and knowledge—some students may know a lot about peace and justice-related issues while others are completely new to the subject. Use the veterans to educate and lead meetings based on their areas of expertise.
- It's a good idea to interchange educational meetings with action-oriented meetings. It's difficult for a group of people to spend time together only learning about the injustices in the world without wanting to do something about them.
- Hold vigils, organize campus clean-ups, hang educational posters around campus, or organize food collections and other projects that serve the needs of the people the group is learning about and passionate about helping.

Written by Jennifer Haut, who was a student organizer at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, and a summer intern at NETWORK in 2005. Jennifer now works with Wellstone Action, and is on the NETWORK Education Program Board.



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