Organizing During a Pandemic

SHAWN FIELDS

CA AAUP CONFERENCE

MARCH 11, 2021

Introduction

Organizing Is...

Difficulties of Organizing During A Pandemic

Case Studies

Takeaways

Exercise

Debrief

Questions?

Organizing is...

building relationships between similarly situated people and converting those relationship into collective power through strategic direct action in order to affect the change they desire

Organizing is...

Intentional

Continuous and progressive

Member-centered

Unified in message

Works toward bringing more people in

Difficulties of Organizing during a Pandemic

Lack of Visibility

Loss of face-to-face organizing/community

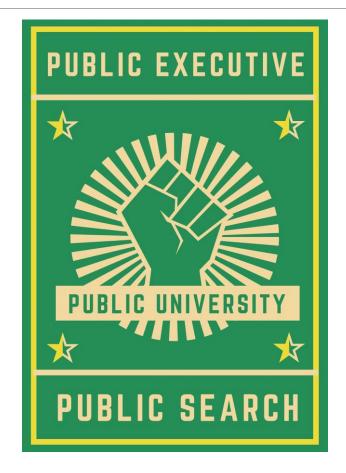
Current Pandemic adding to/exacerbating issues on campus

Burnout

Case Study #1: George Mason University AAUP

GOAL: VISIBILITY

- Growing social media
- Improve visual communication
 - Memes
 - Infographics
 - Zoom/Video Conferencing Profiles
 - Updating/Creating Website



George Mason University AA

GOAL: BUILDING POWER

- Zoom Events
- Email/Letter Campaigns
- Using these events and actions for targeted recruitment for membership and activism
- Using social/work networks

Case Study #2: Ohio University AAUP

GOAL: FIGHT BACK AGAINST AUSTERITY MEASURES

- Budget analysis/alternative budget
- BoT comments & protests
- Small daily actions
- Zoom backdrops
- Car rallies



Ohio University AAUP

GOAL: BUILDING POWER

- Digital office visits
- Forging coalitions with other communities on campus
- Alumni networks

Case Study #3: United Academics of Vermont AAUP-AFT

GOAL: PUSH BACK AGAINST AUSTERITY MEASURES

- Budget Analysis
- Letter Campaigns
- Social Media Campaigns
- Using Mechanisms within their CBA
 - ULPs
 - Grievances



United Academics of Vermont AAUP-AFT

GOAL: BUILD POWER

- Car Rally
- Automated Letters
- Alternative Budgets
- Letters from distinguished faculty
- Solidarity Press Conference
- Legislative Outreach

Case Studies: Takeaways

- Organizing during the pandemic presents new challenges, but it is possible
- We already have many of the tools and frameworks, it requires a pivot in tactics
- The pandemic brings up unexpected opportunities to organize
- Social media and digital communication is key
- Now is the time to build coalitions
- Follow-up, Follow-up, Follow-up

Exercise

Pick one of the issues and create a plan around it

Who are your targets/decision makers around the issue?

- When do they meet?
- Who has the power to change their mind?

Are there others in you campus/local/state community you could work with?

Identify some tactics/actions/events you could use?

What are some ways to follow up with participants?

Debrief

Questions

Thank You!