

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!
