



Student–Worker

SOLIDARITY

Organizing Kit



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Service Worker Solidarity Campaign

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I. Problems and Goals, Improving the Industry



Service workers across the country are organizing to win respect, dignity and fair treatment on the job. Unfortunately, too often employers ignore workers' concerns or use intimidation tactics to silence them, so workers are turning to students for support.

As more and more Universities decide to bring corporations onto campuses to provide services to students, we have begun forming a movement to hold these companies accountable for their business practices from sweatshops to environmental issues to workers' rights.

On September 22, 2004, students from Arizona State University, Johns Hopkins University, Juniata College, Lehigh University, Moravian College, Northwestern University, Temple University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Toronto and York University responded to a request for support from laundry workers in Phoenix, Arizona who were struggling to win a union by participating in a delegation to the laundry plant.

The national action was the official launch of the Service Worker Solidarity campaign, a joint initiative by leading national student organizations, service workers and unions that represent them. Our goal is to support efforts by campus and other service workers to improve working conditions and clean up the service outsourcing industry by persuading industry giants such as ARAMARK, Compass (a.k.a. Bon Appétit, Chartwell's, etc.) and Sodexo to treat workers better.

II. Key Points of the Campaign



- ★ Service workers deserve respect no matter whose uniform they wear.
- ★ We want to make sure that our campuses are a safe space for workers where they receive fair treatment, not intimidation, discrimination and harassment. If the current subcontractor is not willing to provide it, another will.
- ★ University administrators need to express to the company their support for workers' rights. If subcontractors treat workers poorly elsewhere, how will we make sure the same thing doesn't happen here?

III. Defining the Problem - Researching Working Conditions and Contracts



One of the first steps in a campaign is to research the contract, contracting process and working conditions of subcontracted service employees. The following is a general set of questions that might help guide your research. For more in-depth questions, please see Appendix A.

Questions

- What services does the subcontractor provide to your campus?
- How do the subcontractor's contracts work? (Check for each contract if more than one.)
- How does the subcontractor operate on campus?
- What benefits do administrators obtain by outsourcing to the subcontractor?
- Who are the subcontractor's campus workers and how are they treated? (See Appendix B for USAS' survey of campus workers)
- How does the contracting process work?
- What is the subcontractor's history on campus?

IV. How Do We Get Started? Dynamics to Address



(adapted from Rainforest Action Network. www.ran.org)

A lot of students don't get involved in campus activism because they feel like they are not a part of the student activist community. This happens for a lot of reasons including the existence of activist 'cliques' or social groups and behavior that excludes women, queer folks, working class, and people of color. For a lot of these same reasons, what's seen as campus activist communities (and the wider activist communities as well) are often segregated, with 'white' or 'straight' activists working separately and on different issues from queer activists and activists of color. Below are outlined some of the ways you can address these issues, making your organization bigger, stronger and more inclusive. There are no easy answers and the results of centuries of oppression will not be reversed by following several bullet points. However, examining these dynamics can be a starting point to your group's commitment to challenging oppression in your school policy and in our movements.

Activist Cliques

Student organizers building community together isn't necessarily a bad thing- it makes activism more fun, which means people are more likely to stay involved, and it helps foster good group dynamics. It can be a problem, though, when 'activist cliques' emerge. Decisions that should be made through formal process start being made by group members during recreational times; meetings can become too social, making it hard to get anything done; and worst of all, potential new members can be made to feel out of the loop when there are too many inside jokes and assumed background knowledge. Here are some tips for keeping your organization functional and open to new people:

- Make decisions in meetings with an established process that is explained to everyone participating and available in writing. This way, even newcomers and people outside of the 'clique' are included and feel ownership of the group and its projects. Explain the process before you start.
- Make sure social events are inclusive. Not all people interested in the campaign will share your recreational interests. By organizing multiple social events around activities that everyone would feel comfortable participating in, you work toward building personal relationships with people who will be crucial to the work and include everyone in the opportunity to build that network.
- Go easy on the activist-speak! Make sure that all acronyms, activist jargon and references to past campaigns or group members are explained so that nobody feels stupid or left out.
- Avoid inside jokes. This is especially important at the beginning of the year when you are recruiting new members. As hilarious as they may seem to you, nobody likes an inside joke when they're on the outside. The last thing you want to do is scare off potential new members by giving them the impression that your group is some kind of exclusive social club that they're not a part of.

Gender Issues for Men

Sexism is acted out in overt and covert, conscious and unconscious ways. Just because the guys in your group aren't sexually harassing the women and asking them to make coffee during strategy sessions doesn't mean that there aren't problems with the gender dynamics in your group. We have all been raised in a sexist culture and even when we try to rise above them, we find ourselves playing into gender roles and reinforcing stereotypes. In U.S. society people socialized as men tend to be taught to be more aggressive and to take on leadership roles, lessons on how to be a woman teach passivity, and the existence of trans and genderqueer people is made invisible. Just because we're fighting for social justice doesn't mean we're free of all of this cultural baggage. In order to make the most of all that your members have to offer, you need to foster an environment where **everyone** feels comfortable

contributing and taking on leadership roles. Below, we've included a short list of some of the common gender issues facing activist groups and ways you can address them:

- **Division of Labor.** In many groups, work gets divided in a gendered way, with women doing a lot of the grunt work (photocopying, flyering, etc.) and men taking on leadership roles, making decisions and being the ones who represent the organization in meetings and negotiations. A way to avoid this problem is to make sure that all tasks (the fun ones and the boring ones) are assigned through a process agreed upon by the group. Don't leave anything to be done without knowing exactly who is responsible for the task. Appreciate all the hard work that goes into campaigns, not just the high profile work.
- **Airtime.** Another major problem is the fact that male members of many groups end up talking the most in meetings. Female and trans members may find themselves either silenced, or simply agreeing with one side of a debate between two men. This can be really destructive since they have really important information or insights that they may not get to share. Make it a habit to keep track of how often people are speaking during conversations, especially in arguments where overly aggressive tones often shut people out of the discussion. Find tools and activities that bring out everyone's voices.
- **Decision-making.** If men play a dominant role in the campaign and your group lacks a formal process for decision-making, choices may be made by 'the group' without the input of many of its members. If your group just assumes a decision has been reached when most people seem to agree, it is more likely that women (in general- not all women) will be hesitant to voice objections. A formal process will ensure that decisions are truly made by the group and not just by its most vocal (often male) members.

Anti-Racist Organizing

The vast majority of university communities are dominated by white faculty, administrators, trustees, and students. Because of the dominance of white supremacist ideology in the fabric of the U.S., our organizing is done in a racist context. Student groups that are predominantly white need to examine the causes and effects of this dynamic. Many 'white' activists in such groups ask themselves "how can we get people of color to join our groups and movement?" Organizer Chris Crass warns us that this kind of question is barking up the wrong tree. It assumes that white activists "have the answers and now it just needs to be delivered to people of color- as opposed to, people of color have been organizing for a long time (500+ years) and we (white activists) have a lot to learn so maybe we should find ways to form alliances, relationships, and coalitions to work with folks of color and be prepared to learn as well as share." Here are some ways your group can work towards challenging internalized white supremacy in your organizing:

- **Avoid tokenism.** Members of oppressed groups do not represent their entire group. If your group's membership is majority white, for instance, people of color may have reservations about being the spokesperson or acting as a face for the campaign. Seek people out to do tasks based on their skills and interests, not because "it would be good to have a person of color speak at the event tomorrow." Rather than recruiting more people from oppressed groups into the organization and campaign you've organized, ask how you may support the initiatives of people directly affected by racial justice issues and how you can act as an ally in those struggles.
- **Defining 'radical'.** Be careful with your definitions of 'radicalism.' Often white activists create a hierarchy of tactics and assume that the only way to be a powerful activist is to be at barricades or in confrontation. Be respectful of the fact that people have different relationships with authority and stay conscious of the different challenges that working class, queer, women, and people of color have and the risks we take when organizing.
- **Examine the issues you're focused on.** Who is most affected by the issues now? Who would most benefit from the results of your campaign? What input do they have on leading the campaign?

How does this fit in the context of your campus and area organizing? What issues are people of color already organizing around on campus and in the community? Do you ever work on those issues and respect the leadership of groups led by people of color?

Queer Inclusiveness for Straight Folks

The marginalization of GLBTQ people can often be invisible to straight folks since campuses are not places where everyone to feel safe sharing their sexual identity and heterosexism causes us to assume that everyone around us is straight. Here are some tips for making your group a safer space for queer activists:

- **Culture.** Be mindful of words and actions. Using language such as ‘that’s so gay’ is alienating and often hard to confront due to its informality. An explicit anti-discrimination stance as well as building a culture where constructive criticism is an act of love with specific structures in place to do criticism/self-criticism can create the grounds for challenging such behavior and does not make it the sole responsibility of the GLBTQ person to attempt to educate or change others’ behaviors.
- **Risk is real.** Violence based on people’s sexuality is real. Don’t out people. Both being in the closet and being out entail risks for queer folks so don’t presume that you know what is best for someone. If you have an established relationship, check in with people to see where they’re at. If they’re trans, clarify which pronouns that person identifies with, etc.
- **ASS-U-ME.** Don’t make assumptions about people’s sexuality. A key component of queer oppression is the assumption that everyone is straight until proven otherwise.
- Understand that you have certain privileges (having your relationships valued by society, being able to kiss your partner in public without fear etc) that queer folks are denied.

General Strategies for Combating Oppression

Here are some things to keep in mind to keep your group a safe and inclusive space for all students, including women, LGBTQ students and people of color. Remember though, the goal of anti-oppression work is to end oppression not just to have well-behaved people with privilege improve their analyses. Creating inclusive meeting spaces is one step toward changing systems so that all spaces are “safe spaces.”

- Don’t expect anyone to be a spokesperson for their community. This just singles people out and makes them feel isolated, not included. If you think there are members of your group who have ideas to contribute that they are not comfortable raising their hand to share, find exercises that to give everyone the opportunity to speak (or not) as they see fit.
- Make formal organizational commitments to non-discrimination. Put it in your charter or your by-laws. Make it clear in every way possible that your group does not tolerate discrimination in any form and that no discriminatory actions will be considered acceptable in your group. Model the behavior you want to see and create a culture where oppressive behavior can be challenged and changed in positive ways.
- Caucuses where people meet separately (people of color caucus/white folks allies group, gender oppressed caucus/gender privileged allies group, queer caucus/heterosexual allies group) according to how they self identify may be helpful in creating the space to discuss internal dynamics.
- Seek out and support campaigns being led by oppressed people. Taking leadership from oppressed people often means asking, “How can we be of use?” not judging tactics or telling them how to fight for their own self-determination.
- Find effective ways to confront oppressive behavior. Avoid defensiveness. Recognize that as someone who does not live as a target of a specific form of oppression, you will not always be able

to identify the ways it is acted out and may perpetuate it unconsciously. Listen intently and take criticism as a serious opportunity to learn not a character attack. Creating a culture of respectful cultural exchange and constructive criticism will lead to these internal challenges strengthening a group rather than tearing them apart. Prioritize the internal work as highly as the external campaign.

- Don't place the responsibility for fighting oppression on the oppressed. People in positions of privilege need to recognize destructive group dynamics and initiate work to address them.
- Use "I" statements when you speak. People of privileged groups often universalize their experience, not realizing that other people don't share their feelings about situations.
- Interrupt oppressive behavior while it's happening. If a few white males are dominating an argument, point that out to the group and suggest a go-around to get more people talking.
- Think about how much you talk, how easily you take on leadership roles and how much space you take up. Consider what role privilege or oppression related to your gender, sexual orientation, race and class might play in your tendency to take/avoid leadership.
- Learn the histories of resistance of people against their own oppression as well as the history of coalition, alliance, and support work involved in these movements.

Meeting Organization & Roles

The primary function of meetings should be decision-making and each meeting should have specific goals. It should be a space where members feel empowered in the group's decision-making process not talked at. Members should be made to feel (and should actually have) ownership of the group and its choices since they will be the ones carrying out the tactics and strategies decided upon at these meetings.

ORGANIZATION

Make sure that **before** each meeting you decide who will be responsible for the following necessary functions. Your group may decide that the same person will be responsible for some functions each week, while other tasks (especially facilitation) should rotate among members.

- **Agenda.** An agenda displays what to expect during a meeting and gives people a chance to have input in its structure and content.
- **Facilitator.** A role to be rotated among members to bring out people's ideas and ensure the flowing progress of any meeting.
- **Secretary/Note taker.** Someone should be responsible for recording all decisions made and the conversations that led up to them so they can be referenced later. It is especially important to record specific tasks that have been decided on and the people who volunteered to do them.
- **Time Keeper.** This may be the same person as the facilitator. Regardless, someone should be responsible for ensuring that the meeting runs on time and that the items on the agenda do not go over their designated times unless the group decides to change the agenda through established process.
- **Scribe.** If the group is discussing an issue, brainstorming or making announcements, it's often helpful to have someone writing on a board so that everyone can remember and see what was said.
- **Energy Check.** Sometimes meetings get long. Really long. Sometimes you just need to get everyone standing up and jumping around for a minute so you can sit down and be more productive. Vibes watchers capture the mood of the room and insert quick breaks or games so that people don't get bogged down too much.

- **Presenters.** Make sure that anyone who will be reporting back to the group, proposing a new campaign, strategy, or tactic, or making any kind of presentation should know they will be presenting before the meeting. Their presentations should be included in the agenda so that they know when they will be speaking and how much time they have.
- **Food.** Food can keep energy up and tension down and appeal to people's self-interest. We all get hungry.

V. Building a Group - Building a Movement



Adapted from USAS Organizing Kit

(<http://www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org/resources.php>)

Outreach

You may be forming a new group, a subcommittee of an already existing labor solidarity or human rights group, or a coalition. Use existing campus networks to draw more students into the campaign. Put out some initial information over email listserves and speak to progressive groups. Plan an information session or a mini teach-in.

Personal contact is the most basic and probably the best way to recruit people to a movement. Nothing replaces meeting someone, answering their questions, and spending time personally investing them in the campaign. When new students show interest, for example, by attending a meeting, call them afterward to see where they're at, why they're interested, and what they want to do to help the campaign. You can give them ideas of what they can do as well.

Contact the Service Worker Solidarity Campaign, to see if anyone else near your campus has expressed interest in the campaign or labor rights in general at info@serviceworkersolidarity.org.

Don't forget to:

1. **Listen to the people you are trying to organize.** Let them tell you what their concerns are, and how you can interest them in this campaign. There's a different hook for each person who gets involved, so relate and agitate. For example, one person might become because she is concerned about the rights of immigrant workers; another because his mother is a union member; and another because she is unhappy with the quality of vegetarian food options on campus.
2. **Be persistent.** Some people who aren't interested or are "too busy" will become active if you keep talking with them (but stop short of the level of harassment that just pisses people off.)
3. **Get commitments** from people to actually do things. It gets them involved and hopefully interested in the campaign. It also gives them some sense that it's their thing too, and gives you a good reason to talk to them again as follow-up. Make it as easy as possible to get involved by meeting people where they're at and where their schedule's at as well.

Grassroots education and publicity - the keys for recruitment and building your campaign.

1. **Visibility:** People should know about your campaign even if they're completely oblivious to everything else happening on campus.
2. **Accessibility.** Your campaign should be easy to understand, easy to contact and easy to join. That means your should be message short and simple (avoid jargon), your meetings well-publicized and your activities suited to people with varying schedules and levels of commitment.
3. **Positivity:** Do not just emphasize the horrors workers face. Tell students what can and is being done about it.
4. **Creativity and humor:** Colorful, visual, interactive, eye-catching publicity is more effective as long as it doesn't obscure your message. Same thing goes for materials and tactics that tackle a serious issue with good humor.
5. **Repetition:** Use multiple means multiple times to get your message across.

6. Reputation: Don't forget to include your organization's name on all your material and contact information.

PRIDE: TO APPEAL TO A BROADER STUDENT BASE, USE SCHOOL PRIDE AND SPIRIT. ("THE UNIVERSITY SHOULD BE A LEADER ON AND OFF THE FIELD.")

7. Focus: Keep your message focused on your campaign goals and the key decision-makers. If you want your school's administration to take a stand and use their power to ensure fair treatment of workers, make sure they stay in the spotlight.

Post flyers, set up information tables, leaflet in high-traffic areas, write guest editorials letters to the editor, op-eds, or put ads in your campus newspaper. Don't forget to include the meeting times of your groups in the campus calendar. Check out local radio stations for call-in shows. Wear symbols of support like armbands, ribbons, or buttons, and distribute them to people so they can show their support.

Coalitions - Building support for the service worker solidarity campaign.

Involving groups through coalitions is key to building the grassroots movement necessary to get university administrators and corporations to agree to the demands of the campaign. Remember, whether it's building your group or building a broad coalition, people participate based on the relationships they have and mutually beneficial goals. How have you supported the groups you're asking for support from? Do you only approach the Office of Multicultural Affairs when you need something or do you attend events put on by groups you're looking for support from on a regular basis whether they're cultural or political? If a group has seen you out supporting them before, reciprocating the support will be much more likely. Supporting other groups is not only a way to build coalition but also a way to strengthen all our work and the movement as a whole. "I got your back and you've got mine" can be very real in building coalition and supporting common causes.

Here are three models of coalitions:

1. The *endorsement model*: a list of endorsers is built to show the breadth of support for the campaign. Some endorsing groups may do little beyond adding their names to the list while others will help turn out people to events.
2. The *associate model*: Groups and leaders are encouraged to play an active role in the campaign (collecting signatures, letters, etc.) but decision-making still rests with one main group.
3. The *partner model*: All groups share in decision-making and active participation.

Think about what model works best for your campus. If you are going to build a coalition based on the associate or partner model, member groups should be involved at the earliest stages of the campaign (i.e. the strategy to kick off the campaign and approach the administration).

The earlier you involve people and the more power is shared, the more folks will feel invested in the campaign's success.

When approaching other groups for support, here are some things to think about:

1. **Why should the group care?**
If you want people to take your issue on, figure out how it relates to the mission, identity and concerns of the group you're addressing.
2. **What can the group do?**
Depending on where you are with the campaign, and what sort of coalition you're forming, you can ask the group to sign on to a letter or write their own to the administration (in support of disclosure for example). You could prepare a resolution and ask people to endorse the campaign by passing the resolution. The content of the resolution can serve as an educational tool as well. The contact is also a chance to expand your core membership. Encourage anyone

interested to come to your meetings and get more involved. You could also ask the group if they would appoint a representative or liaison to you campaign.

Making the move - groups, individuals, and organizations to approach include:

1. **People of color organizations**
While officers and managers of outsourced service companies are more likely to be white, service workers are more likely to be people of color. There is a rich history of collaboration between students of color and campus workers at schools where most workers are people of color. It's important to contact the Black Student Union, Asian Student Union, MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan) chapter and other people of color groups early, to find out if they are already active around the issue and/or have established relationships with campus workers, and also to get their input/participation.
2. **Queer student organizations**
Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Transgender people are especially vulnerable to workplace harassment and discrimination. Helping workers win a union and/or establishing other protections for workers on campus is one way to prevent GLBT workers from being victimized by managers or . Further, queers have long been among the most dedicated activists fighting for justice in many domains, including workers' rights, civil rights and women's rights.
3. **Faith groups and campus ministries**
Many faith-based groups and institutions found on campus and in the surrounding community have a strong commitment to social justice. Because of their prominent role in society, faith leaders can sometimes help "get through" to decision-makers and other key players (administrators, politicians, reporters) who have difficulty hearing students and workers. This is especially true at Catholic and other religious schools. Activists can talk to clergy about mentioning the issue at a sermon, put leaflets at the exit of mass and services and make announcements at services.
4. **Feminist and women's groups**
Although officers and managers are more likely to be men, the companies' service workers are more likely to be women. Increasingly, national and campus women's groups have are taking on the mistreatment of low-wage women workers by companies like Wal-Mart.
5. **Community service organizations**
Many organizations can offer volunteer support for events and actions, key links to other community related groups, and ideas on recruitment and volunteer retention. These groups may be particularly interested in projects that help address the direct needs of workers and their families while strengthening the connection between workers and students (i.e. worker appreciation dinners, child-care, English classes). Approaching organizations in the communities in which workers live can broaden support beyond campus and the cafeteria.
6. **Alumni, individuals and groups**
Alumni often have more power than the current students because of the money they can give. Try drawing on alumni of progressive student groups on campus. Look through old yearbooks. Famous alum supporters are especially valuable.
7. **Fraternities/sororities**
The Greeks, in their community service mode, can be helpful allies with plenty of resources, including philanthropy departments. On occasion they can help turn people out to events and actions. African-American fraternities and sororities have a tradition of community and political involvement that often continues long after members graduate from college.
8. **Resident Assistants**
RAs can provide slots for people to present the campaign at hall meetings. They sometimes have access to funds from a Resident Hall Association.

9. Athletic Teams and Athletes

Star student athletes can be influential allies, particularly if the company that employs campus service workers runs the concessions at the main campus sports venues. Just, keep in mind that they will be under pressure from coaches and the school, who control athletic scholarships and other perks, not to get involved.

10. Student Government

Resolutions passed by student government have important symbolic value, and can bring press attention and boost the profile of your campaign. They can also be a good source of resources - such as funds for an "alternative" food event - and may even have some control over venues where the company sells food. But be forewarned, many student governments follow rather than lead the student body and will only support your campaign after you gain a lot of support from other campus groups.

11. Graduate student unions and associations

Graduate student associations and teaching assistants' unions are quite engaged with university policy already, and are often progressive. Many graduate student unions are organizing and winning some very powerful campaigns throughout the country.

12. Faculty and staff unions and associations

Faculty unions, like teaching assistants' union, can be very helpful. Faculty and staff who supported the 1980s anti-apartheid divestment campaigns, and anti-war movement veterans, and veterans from other past campus political struggles - are natural allies in many ways.

If you're looking for faculty allies, the American Studies, Area Studies, Ethnic Studies, Labor Studies, Sociology, Religion, Women's Studies, Political Science, Environmental Studies and Urban Studies departments often harbor potential supporters, but, don't neglect other departments either.

Faculty supporters can give you an opportunity to speak at a class, allow you to do campaign research for credit, co-sponsor speakers or screenings, require or promote attendance at events, make public statements of support and add legitimacy to your arguments, give you tips on who to talk to in the administration, sponsor a support resolution in Faculty Council (or an equivalent faculty organization), and help your strategize on how to achieve your campaign goals - for those that have organizing experience.

13. Union locals and Central Labor Councils

Local worker's unions are an excellent coalition-builder. They need support just as you do, so make sure to offer that their support for you will build their constituency as well. Given that the anti-sweat campaign is fundamentally based in institutionalizing improvements for workers, it is essential you support and work with your local unions as much as possible.

Talking with workers

Before you can start any campaign, you must first build a relationship with those you wish to work with. In the case of this campaign it is the outsourced service workers at your school. For workers to organize it takes abundant courage, and in many cases sacrifices that we as students might not understand. It is imperative that we recognize those sacrifices and begin to accept the responsibility of supporting those workers.

Remember that those smiling faces behind the counter have more to them than that job.

SPEAK

There is no better way to engage in conversation than simply saying "hello" "please" "thank you". Remember it is the little things that count.

Listen

As activists, the sound of our own voices can become comforting. However, it is much more important to hear the stories of those around us. You will be surprised by the willingness of people to bring you into their world, just because you take time to listen.

Don't be afraid to ask questions.

As a student, it is okay to have questions and to ask them. You are one of the greatest resources to a campaign, because you are always on the ground. But remember, build your relationship before dealing with sensitive issues.

Make sure it is an appropriate time to speak with the person.

Remember, that this is someone's job and their first priority is to complete the task at hand. You do not want to be a distraction that prevents him or her from doing his or her work.

Make observations.

Who talks to whom? Who is the manager? How many workers are there? If you worked there, what would you change?

NOW THAT YOUR RELATIONSHIP HAS GROWN...STUDENT-LABOR SOLIDARITY

Don't Make Promises You Can't Keep

Nobody wants a liar in their life! So if you cannot do something, say you cannot do it. Remember, you have a very fragile relationship, and it takes a lot for many people to trust others. Be consistent and honest, meaning know your capabilities and limitations.

Recognize Differences

Realize that there will be obstacles that you will face. Be it class, racial or language barriers, you, as a partner in solidarity, have to recognize that you add and benefit from these barriers. As college students, you're the ones being served by the service workers. Those are very different experiences, recognize that and take the responsibility that comes with it.

Protect People's Identity

Ensure confidentiality. It is not imperative that everyone on campus know that name of the worker who shared their story with you. It is important to share the story but not the name. Also, if you ever speak to the management, do not feel the need to share a worker's name either. It can possibly add to the harassment, intimidation and discrimination that we are trying to eradicate.

Continue to care for and respect individuals!

VI. Media Work



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE FORMAT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: NAME

Date

TITLE

PHONE

HEADLINE

Subhead

Intro paragraph, Text with quotes, etc.

--30--

1. Think of what headline you want to see in the paper and use it for your press release.
2. Press releases and media advisories should include the who, what, where when, and why within the length of one page.
3. Make your main points clear and obvious.
4. End press releases with either -30- or ##. Kind of like "over and out" on a walkie-talkie

TIPS FOR ORGANIZING A PRESS CONFERENCE

Planning your Press Conference

- Start on time and keep it short!
- Invite people who support the campaign, are well-respected on campus or in the community, are directly affected by the issue to speak in addition to campaign members. But make sure everyone who's speaking stays "on message" so your point gets across.
- Make it easily accessible to the press and the people attending. Not everyone knows the names of residence halls or campus layout.
- Midweek and mid-day events are the most covered by the press.
- Do you have all the equipment and visuals you need? Remember that it's hard to get on TV without good visuals.
- Are you required to have a permit for the event? Are you going to get one?

Contacting the Press

- Create a contact list or find a list (from other organizations, local unions, etc.) to have ready whenever you have an event.
- Fax your advisory the morning before the event to all your contacts. Most computers have a fax program that make it so you don't have to stand by a machine dialing a hundred numbers.
- Fax again the morning of the event and follow up with a phone call to sell the story. Most decisions about what will be covered are made at 8:00am meetings.

Talking to Reporters

1. Remember that nothing is off-the-record but also remember that not all questions need to be answered. If a reporter asks you an off-topic question, redirect it to your point.

Question: “How many people attend your meetings?” “

Answer: “This is about how many workers have been forced into anti-union meetings. Universities need to hold this company to a standard that protects workers from intimidation.”

2. Media can be intimidating, be friendly with them. Remember this is about your message. Talk slowly and make sure anyone watching who knows nothing about your campaign will understand.
3. Practice makes perfect. Work together in forming your talking points and stick them. If you’re unsure of a fact offer to check on it later or redirect back to your main point.
4. Get back to reporters as quickly as possible and remember that if you promise them information you need to get it to them in order to maintain credibility and a positive relationship.
5. Make sure that what you say is always accurate. If you don’t know it or can’t back it up, don’t say it.
6. Help make the reporter’s job easier by keeping your message clear and giving them all the information they need. Reporters don’t have a lot of time to research your story for you, and if they do, they might not end up reporting what you want

GROUP PRACTICE FOR PREPARING FOR THE MEDIA

During a meeting or in a more scheduled training:

BRAINSTORM TALKING POINTS FOR THE CAMPAIGN.

- What are the various parts to the issue/campaign?
- Fair treatment for workers
- Safe, Intimidation-free campus
- Workers’ Rights
- Corporate Accountability
- Privatization, Outsourcing
- Student voice on campus
- What are several short statements we can say on each?
- What will administrators or opponents say about the campaign?
- How do we respond?

Line up in two lines facing each other.

“The line on the left will be the campaign members. The line on the right will be reporters from various press.” Give a context to the event. “You are holding a teach-in on privatization and the threat to workers’ rights on campus. You’ll interview for five minutes and then switch.”

Have participants represent news sources that require creative and/or simple answers (ex: “I’m here from the Kindergarten newswire. How does this affect our readers?”)

Freeze.

At the five minute mark, tell participants to freeze. Debrief.

Ask the interviewees: "What worked well? What didn't work at all? What was really hard to answer?"

Ask the interviewers: "How did the interviewee do? What did they do well? What could they have done better?"

Switch.

Redo the exercise with the roles reversed then debrief again.

TIPS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

Toastmasters International Public Speaking Tips:

<http://www.freenet.edmonton.ab.ca/toast/tips.html>

VII. Actions and Tactics



(Adapted from USAS Organizing Kit - <http://www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org/resources.php>)

Strategy versus tactics: there's a big difference!

This comes from a small part of the Midwest Academy's Organizing for Social Change manual and the Grassroots Organizing Weekend (GROW)

For information on bringing a GROW to their campus students should contact:

The United States Student Association Foundation Tel: (202)347-USSA or trainings@usstudents.org

Administrators generally make decisions based on perceived self-interest - theirs and the university's. When they concede to student demands, it is often because student organizing has made it in their interest (for fundraising for the school, PR, or the future of their career) to address your concerns.

Alone, we are relatively powerless, because the president of the university is not accountable to an individual. Fundamentally, students should have more governing power at their institutions, but that's another whole issue in itself.

You are aware that we win victories when we organize effectively and build power. So how do we do that effectively?

Too often, activists think in terms of tactics, and not strategy. Tactics should be tools that are grounded in your overall strategy for building power. They are nothing more than figuring out the most effective and creative way to carry out that strategy.

Tactics are most effective when they are outside the experience of decision-makers and within the experience of the students involved in your campaign. At some places, a letter-writing campaign could be enough. At others, where there are four rallies a week on campus, you won't be noticed without a large base of public support.

Not every campaign ends with a dramatic action, although many have and need to get to that point. There are thousands of other ways to exercise power. Tactics are many and varied: from low-level like the presentation of thousands of petition signatures, or editorials in the student newspaper, to high-level tactics like hunger strikes.

One tactic is never enough. That's why you need to start thinking about strategy first.

- **Decisions-maker - Power Analysis.** To start thinking strategically, consider who can give you what you want? Who is close to him or her? Who has more influence over his or her decisions than you do, and how can you influence them to get your message across? Think how you would respond to various campaign tactics if you were in his or her shoes.
- **Allies.** Consider your constituents and allies. Your constituents are the people you're trying to organize to build power. Think of the all of the groups mentioned above and what kind of support they could provide.
- **Opponents.** We also need to be conscious of our opponents - so think ahead! Don't let opponents distract you, just be aware of what they're doing and if needed, organize responses to their strikes at your campaign.
- **Resources.** Think about your resources. Do you have a gathering place, an office, or a budget? Do you have contacts in the press? How about phone lists? Phones to phone-bank? Thinking about this will give you a greater sense of what you need to do and what you need to do it.

Finally, note that your victory is never final. Student pressure needs to be continual - especially if we're going to enforce higher standards and maintain worker and student power to make change on campus. We need to make sure our student groups continue to exist after we're gone.

Assessing your strategy:

It's important to think through your strategy from the perspective of the decision-maker you're trying to influence. Ask yourself some questions decision-makers often ask.

- Will what happens on campus stay on campus? If so, what do administrators have to worry about, since they effectively control what happens there.
- Will the pressure keep building over time or will the campaign fade away?
- Will the campaign channel pre-existing frustrations or exacerbate other controversies (i.e. an unpopular mandatory meal plan that has recently been imposed)?
- Will the campaign involve people who have power over the university?
- Will I look good or bad if I do what the students want?
- Will I feel good about myself when I look in the mirror?

Activities and Actions:

From the Montgomery Bus Boycott to the Guerilla Girls, taking action and social change go hand in hand. Think creatively about your action. How will you get people's attention? Escalated tactics require thinking about the timing, your demand, and the level of support you have on campus. There is a lot of planning that goes into a successful direct action.

Some questions to consider:

1. Who is the decision-maker?
2. What do you hope to accomplish?
3. Can you turn out the number of people needed to make the event a success? (You can leaflet with three people, but don't have a rally with less than several dozen!)
4. Do you have energetic speakers or an interesting performance planned?
5. Do you have something for people who attend to do to engage themselves in the campaign?
6. Is your message clear and simple?
7. Have you notified the press?
8. Is the timing and location of the event good to reach a lot of people?
9. Do you have all your facts straight?

Make your activities creative, appealing to students, and challenging to power.

Examples are: guerrilla street theater, pickets, teach-ins, tabling, leafleting, banner hangs, ribbons and buttons, demonstrations, videos, letter-writing, call-in days, and so on

Appendix A



Detailed Questions on Contracting:

What services does the subcontractor provide to your campus?

- ★ Food service?
 - Does the subcontractor run cafeterias? All of the cafeterias or just some of them?
 - Does the subcontractor manage food courts, coffee shops or campus stores? (Hint- The company may manage operations of fast-food or other franchises on campus.
 - Does the subcontractor cater events? All campus events or just certain types of events?
 - Does the subcontractor manage concessions at an athletic or performing arts facility on campus?
- ★ Facilities management services (cleaning, maintenance, etc.)?
- ★ Laundry services (hospital linens, etc.)?
- ★ *In each service area, does the subcontractor directly employ the workers or just the managers?*

How do the subcontractor's contracts work? (Check for each contract if more than one.)

- ★ When was the existing contract signed?
- ★ *When is the contract up for renewal or re-bid?*
- ★ How is the contract term structured?
 - A set term of years followed by re-bid or renewal process?
 - A set term followed by a period of year-to-year renewals?
 - Year-to-year renewals with no set term?
- ★ How are finances and payment structured in the contract?
 - Is the subcontractor reimbursed for major expenses (i.e. food purchases) or required to cover those expenses out of contract revenues?
 - Is there a cap on the amount of revenues or profits that can go back to the subcontractor? How are those amounts calculated?
 - Are there targets the subcontractor is expected or required to meet under the contract?
 - Are there targets the subcontractor must meet in order to maximize its revenues and/or profits?
- ★ What promises did the subcontractor make (in writing or verbally) to obtain the contract?
- ★ Who has access to the contract? The public? The selection committee?
- ★ Can the university decide to terminate the contract in the middle of the contract period? (Hint- The answer should always be "yes.")

- ★ How do price increases occur? Can the company increase prices unilaterally or can they only increase prices with university approval? If the latter, how often can they request price increases?
- ★ Does the contract require a certain level of food quality or is the company free to make all decisions about products purchased?
- ★ What kind of financial record-keeping is required? How often is the company required to report its profits and expenses? To whom does it report? Which university office maintains these records?

How does the subcontractor operate on campus?

- ★ Are students required to participate in a meal plan?
 - Who is required to participate?
 - How does the plan work (i.e. set number of meals, point system)?
 - How long has the plan been in place?
- ★ Does the subcontractor have a monopoly on campus food service?
 - Are there any other food options on campus?
 - Are campus groups required to purchase food for events from the subcontractor?
 - Do students not on a meal plan have any realistic alternative to eating the subcontractor's food?
- ★ How does the subcontractor use campus facilities?
 - Does the subcontractor lease campus facilities? Under what terms?
 - Who sets policies for the use of facilities where the subcontractor operates (i.e. cafeterias, food courts) - the subcontractor or the school? Who implements them?
 - Have there been conflicts between the subcontractor and the school or the subcontractor and students regarding use of facilities where the subcontractor operates?

What benefits do administrators obtain by outsourcing to the subcontractor?

- ★ Does the school receive direct financial benefits from contract?
 - Does the school receive income from the food service operations?
 - Has outsourcing reduced direct cost to school of providing benefits to outsourced employees (i.e. health insurance, pension, free tuition for children)?
- ★ Do school/administrators receive other benefits from the relationship with the subcontractor?
 - Does the subcontractor provide capital investments or loans for new equipment or improved facilities? What are the terms under which the investments or loans are made? If loans, where does revenue for repayment come from.
 - Does the subcontractor make monetary or in-kind donations to the school or affiliated programs?
 - Does the subcontractor provide any services free of charge to the university or to administrators?

Who are the subcontractor’s campus workers and how are they treated?

- ★ How many workers does the company employ?
 - How many are full-time? How many part-time?
 - How many are management? How many non-management?
 - What are the workforce demographics (gender, race, age, ability, citizenship/residency status)? Is there a relationship between demographics and work assignments or compensation?
 - Does the company employ a group of developmentally disabled workers? Do their conditions of employment differ from those of other workers? What arrangement does the company have with agencies that help these workers seek employment?
 - Does the company employ student workers? Do their wages and working conditions differ from the non-student employees?
- ★ What’s the workers’ history?
 - How long have they been around?
 - How many were employed on campus before the subcontractor arrived?
- ★ Are the workers unionized? If so, what is their relationship like with management?
- ★ What are their wages and working conditions?
 - What’s the starting wage? What are long-serving employees paid? How often are raises given, how large and on what basis?
 - What benefits does the company offer (health insurance, pension, paid vacation, etc.)? Are the benefits available to all workers or just some (i.e. only full-time employees)? What proportion of those eligible use the benefits?
 - How much does the health insurance cost on a monthly basis, for individual coverage as well as for family coverage?
 - What is the company’s Family Medical Leave Act program?
 - Do the workplaces comply with all health and safety regulations? Have workers been injured on the job in the recent past? What is the company’s sick leave policy and what is the actual practice (i.e. do employees end up having to work sick)? Health and safety?
 - Does the company comply with overtime rules?
- ★ What are the subcontractor and university policies affecting workers?
 - Are workers restricted from interaction with other workers or students?
 - Are workers restricted from coming to the worksite off-hours?
 - Other policies?
- ★ What are workers’ top concerns? What would they like to see changed?

How does the contracting process work?

- ★ Who has the authority to select food and other service contractors? Who else is involved in the process? Do students have input?
- ★ What criteria are used to determine which bid is selected?

- How were the criteria established?
- Are the same criteria used to determine whether a contract is renewed?
- Are there any legal limits on the criteria that can be used?
- ★ Who were the subcontractor’s competitors the last time around?

What is the subcontractor’s history on campus?

- ★ How long has company provided services? Who provided food service before the subcontractor?
- ★ What is the financial history of food service on campus (before/after the subcontractor)?
- ★ Have there been problems with the subcontractor on campus?
 - Problems with food quality?
 - Problems with food safety?
 - Problems with variety of food options (i.e. vegan, kosher, halal)?
 - Financial problems?
 - Other problems?

Places to seek information

Campus press archives- Some campus papers keep archives dating back several years, and it may be helpful to search for articles that cover the selection process, promises made by the company regarding service, other issues of concern, past campaigns against the company, and problems that have arisen over the years.

Contracts and Requests for Proposal- Contracts and RFPs issued by public institutions are generally available to members of the public upon request (usually made to the procurement or information officer).

Health and safety inspection reports- Local health departments conduct regular inspections of restaurants and other food service operations. You can call to obtain copies of reports on your campus and other sites managed by the company, as well as hearing dates for any violations.

University website- Many universities (especially public ones) post announcements, committee meeting minutes, contract bid-dates, policy changes and other useful information on their websites. Depending on how much information is there, you may want to search for keywords like “food” and the company’s name using the school’s search engine or the Google function that permits searches within a website.

People to ask for information

Administrator(s) in charge of the subcontractor’s contract- The administrator responsible for the subcontractor’s contract is in a position to provide answers to nearly all of your questions if he or she chooses to do so. At public universities, administrators are obligated to provide a copy of the subcontractor’s contract, although they may require students file a formal Freedom Of Information (FOI) request. At private universities, administrators can provide a copy of the contract if they choose, and even if they don’t, most will answer questions regarding the contract. Administrators can also request information from the subcontractor on a wide range of topics, including the company’s activities elsewhere, and in our experience, the subcontractor has generally complied with those requests.

Members of food service selection committee- The college administrator who signs a food service contract may delegate decision-making to - or solicit a recommendation from - a committee whose

members can include other administrators, faculty and sometimes even students. Committee members may be willing to discuss how the process has worked in the past, which other vendors put in bids and why the subcontractor was chosen.

Service workers- Service workers employed by the subcontractor on campus are in the best position to talk about their wages and working conditions, company policies that affect them and how to best communicate with other workers. They may also have information on upcoming events; food quality and/or safety problems; how the company's current contract works; and company plans to pursue additional business on campus or elsewhere. As noted previously, however, it is extremely important to respect workers' space and protect their confidentiality.

Appendix B:**National Service Worker Solidarity Survey**

Hey, everyone! USAS, SLAP and the Service Worker Solidarity Campaign are putting together a report on the state of service workers' labor conditions in order to help build industry-wide student-service worker solidarity movements on campuses across the country. We can't do this without your help. We're asking for one person from each college/university to fill out this survey. Please try to answer as many as possible. If you don't have time to answer all of them, please make sure you answer the "primary questions." Thanks! If you have any questions, e-mail us at info@serviceworkersolidarity.org

Please provide your contact information (and an additional contact, preferably of a 1st or 2nd year student)

PERSON FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY:

School: _____ Name: _____

Graduation Year: _____ Email: _____

School Phone: _____ Permanent/Cell Phone: _____

School Address: _____

Home/Summer/Permanent Address: _____

OTHER CONTACT:

School: _____ Name: _____

Graduation Year: _____ Email: _____

School Phone: _____ Permanent/Cell Phone: _____

School Address: _____

Home/Summer/Permanent Address: _____

Primary Questions:

- I. Describe your school: name, location, public/private, religious affiliation, mission statement? What's the rough demographic breakdown of your campus around race, and gender? What's the total student population? What's the tuition cost? What percentage of students are on financial aid?

