

Mobilizing Students

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Before we can discuss how students like us can mobilize support for the Assi workers, we must discuss the steps necessary in order to reach that stage of mobilizing. First, it is imperative for organizers to deeply look at the issue at hand before mobilizing students towards a certain cause.

This means looking at an issue in the context of the surrounding community and finding the best means to connect the two. For example, an organizer has to be knowledgeable not only about the issue being addressed, but as well the community being outreached to. Having knowledge about the community, the organizer will know the best way to spark their interest. For those who have never heard of the issue, organizers must begin with the most basic information about the campaign in such a way that the audience can understand it and find how it relates to them.

Once a person has gained a basic understanding, the organizer can further cultivate consciousness through raising the level of dialogue. In doing so, people will be aroused or agitated, willing to take action with the guidance of the organizer.

For any action to be successful, it must be planned as a collective. It is important to seek out the best course of action, depending on the issue. Some courses of action, however effective, may not be as successful in different situations. For example, an organizer must consider what is more effective — boycotting or protesting a restaurant chain because they exploit their farm workers. In another example, a forum might not be the best way to arouse interest in an anti-war campaign because it is likely to attract people with diverse opinions. It is

not as conducive for asking questions and could also be intimidating for people who don't know as much about the issue.

In applying this method of educating, arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the students of UCLA regarding the Assi campaign, we can come up with creative means of arousing interest.

An example is a forum that will discuss basic information of the issue. Showing a documentary can help to solidify their full understanding and interest in the issue. Flyering, tabling, and signing petitions on campus can also help reach those who are not as involved and less exposed to community action. Making announcements in classes or organization meetings can be a useful way to disseminate information and recruit people who may be interested in the campaign. Building coalitions with other organizers and organizations in the community can help spread the word about a campaign.

As mentioned, creating dialogue is an important way of arousing interest. Engaging in educational discussions that include a smaller number of people can create a more intimate setting where people won't be as afraid to ask questions. In our experience with educational discussions they have been with our peers, which created a more comfortable atmosphere for creating dialogue.

An extremely successful way of mobilizing students that we have seen in the past are musical shows that feature performers and artists that have conscious messages. Advertising it for what it is — a live show — can bring out people who are merely interested in the music; organizers can only hope that the artistry and messages being presented spark new consciousness along the

way. Music and art then are not only used to cultivate creative outlets as a means for self-expression, but also getting messages across to the masses. It doubles as education and entertainment, making an increased arousal of interest.