

Collaborating with other Campus Entities to Explore the Issue of Hate On Campus Through Programming: Nine Programs the Student Union Can Present Throughout the Year

By Kelly Stevens

How do we as professionals in the field of student unions and activities create opportunities for our students, faculty and staff to address and explore the issue of hate and its impact and influence on our campuses? How do we maximize our impact through our choices of programs and projects? What messages are we really sending through our programming?

- 1. Visual Art Exhibit** – Work with the faculty members in the art department or graphics design classes to develop a theme addressing the issue of hate and have students create artwork that addresses the selected theme. Provide space in the union, either a traditional gallery or a site-specific location(s) for an exhibition of the students' work. Although an individual student may be selected to present an exhibition of his/her work, a collaboration of students creating artwork expands the opportunity for many students to explore the issue of hate and create artwork addressing the topic. Consider that exploring a social issue such as hate through artwork creates two levels of involvement for students. First, the students able to view the artwork are involved in the issue at an awareness raising level. Secondly, those students creating artwork reach at least the point of exploration and possibly also the level of application. Also, should the instructor choose to incorporate the theme throughout the course, this presents an opportunity for the exhibition to be a culmination of the students' work throughout the course. Additionally, instructors outside of the art department may choose to use the process of creating artwork for their students. Students in a class like "Exploring Race Relations within the United States" may use the process of creating artwork as a teaching or learning method resulting in artwork that could be used in the exhibition.
- 2. Poetry Reading** - Host a campus reading around the theme of hate and its impact on campus. Work with the English faculty to have students create poems incorporating the selected theme. Consider that working with the faculty a semester ahead of time may enable the topic to be incorporated into the poetry classes syllabi. To take this project a step further, collect, publish and distribute the poems presented at the reading. This can be done in a traditional journal format, included on the union Web site, or even published in the campus newspaper.
- 3. Theatrical performance/dramatic readings** – Host a play competition wherein students may develop and present a one-act play centered around the theme. If your theater department is receptive, involve them as a cosponsor. Perhaps the selected work could then be produced through the student acting classes or even through an independent study course. Depending on the staging, the selected work could also be presented in the student union. If the theater department is not an option, explore your student organizations that may be performance based or individual students who have an interest. This project presents many levels of involvement and exploration of the topic including writing the play, the student actors, the event's marketing and the audience's participation. Consider also that a

collaboration with your campus diversity trainers or faculty could be included in the project. Some presentations may present the opportunity to have the audience participate in a dialogue about the play following the performance. Additionally, some faculty may be willing to ask their students to attend and to then lead class discussions about the play. Additionally, your campus orientation program or first-year experience programs may be interested in have a performance presented to their participating students.

4. **Campus dialogue sessions** – Invite faculty members and teaching assistants to facilitate regular dialogue sessions that could be presented in any number of locations, including the college union, the residence halls or other campus locations. Consider that the emphasis should be on dialogue among the students participating in the session. One approach to this could be to ask the facilitator to present a 15-20 minute presentation to begin the dialogue and to then lead the session participants in a dialogue about the topic.
5. **Button/ribbon/T-shirt design** – Depending on your college union environment, your employees may be able to assist in awareness raising and to create a consistent message about the college union’s stance on hate on campus. Work with your graphics design staff or the campus graphics design faculty members to have the design students design any wearable item around the theme of hate and the union’s stance. Ask that your union’s employees wear the item (button, ribbon or T-shirt) on certain days or for a consistent length of time. Consider that this request also presents an opportunity to begin a dialogue with your employees about hate on campus and what they can do to counteract it. Another consideration is to explore additional groups on campus, such as the bookstore, residence life and the orientation staff who may also be interested in wearing such an item. Though more passive in action, this project enables the union and the campus to send a consistent and persistent message regarding their stance on the issue of hate.
6. **Marketing campaign** – Work with the marketing classes to develop, prepare and implement an educational campaign addressing the issue of hate. Consider that this project enables the students actually to design and implement a real-life project, attractive to faculty members and to students for portfolio building. Additionally, the need for the marketing students to explore the issue of hate in order to develop a marketing strategy and campaign presents another opportunity for growth and understanding among some of the campus’ students. The implementation of the educational campaign also serves as an awareness-raising project for the students who interact with the campaign. Consider that selling a concept for change as opposed to an item encourages the students to address the issue of long term effects through marketing and what is involved versus short-term effects.
7. **Student Peer Training Sessions** – Work with faculty members and students in such departments as peace and conflict studies to develop and present training sessions about hate, its impact and proactive strategies that students can take to counteract it. Consider the number of peer leaders on campus, the union board, the student government, the programming board, the orientation leaders, the residence assistants and so on. In teaching the topic, the student presenters will be required to research and explore the issue of hate. For the student leaders participating in the training, the sessions should explore proactive strategies they can exercise. Additionally, by including the issue in training sessions, it affords the students the opportunity to explore their role as leaders in counteracting hateful actions. Consider that what we include in our student training sessions also sends strong messages to our students about what we value in the college union environment.

8. **Journalism/mass communications students** – Work with journalism students to develop articles on the issue of hate and its impact on campus. The finished works can then be printed in the campus newspaper or as a newsletter sponsored by the college union. Television and film students can develop shows or films around the theme of hate and its impact on campus. This can be particularly useful if they develop a college-oriented video that can be used in other avenues such as cross cultural training sessions and retreats. (For those who use either of the videos “Skin Deep” or “The Color of Fear,” you may have encountered responses from the students such as the lack of a feminine perspective in the latter video and the age of the former video.) Once completed, for those college unions with television and VCR/DVD/film capabilities, present a showing of their work and even a premier of their work.
9. **Debate/mock trial** – Collaborate with the law school or criminology faculty to develop a case study about hate occurring on campus. Have law or criminology students explore the case study and present their findings in a public forum. This forum may take the form of a traditional lecture-presentation, a debate or even a mock trial. In this case, the college union may choose to provide the venue and the marketing of the event. A follow up activity may include a display in the union about the legal aspects of the issue of hate, in particular how it interacts with the First Amendment. Your campus police department may also prove a valuable resource and collaborator in this project.

Kelly Stevens, Assistant Director, University Student Union, California State University, Fresno.

FORDHAM HANDOUT

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH

823 United Nations Plaza
New York, 10017

MEMORANDUM

To: Fordham University Residence Hall Staff

From: Jeffrey A. Ross, Ph.D.
Director, Campus/Higher Education Affairs

Date: December 1, 1999

Subject: prevention and response to hate crimes and behaviors on campus

Warning Signs (NOTE: look for overall pattern, not isolated factors)

- Withdrawal from social interaction with others
- Estrangement from family and home community, has few friends
- Excessive feelings of atomization: isolation and being alone
- Excessive feelings of having been rejected by others
- Fails to bond with school and campus community
- Feelings of being picked on and/or persecuted
- Perceived (and/or real) financial stress
- Uncontrolled acts of verbal and possibly physical anger, severe rage for seemingly minor reasons
- Spiraling and reinforcing academic difficulties, excessive absence from class
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse (often in non social situations)
- Intolerance for differences, repeated displays of prejudicial attitudes and beliefs
- Attracted to extremist symbols, groups and ideologies
- Damage to and/or destruction of property
- Repeated threats to others when angry
- Depression, severe mood swings, self-injurious behavior, possible thoughts of suicide
- Excessive resort to name calling, cursing or abusive language
- Bullying of others (may have a history of being bullied)
- History of being abused
- Tendency to blame others for personal problems and difficulties

POEM

(This Poem was e-mailed by a Columbine High School Student.)

"The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.

We have bigger houses, but smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, but not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor.

We've conquered outer space, but not inner space; we've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice.

We have higher incomes. But lower morals; we've become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of tall men and short character; steep profits and shallow relationships.

These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure, but less fun; more kinds of food, but less nutrition.

These are the days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes.

It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom; a time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to make a difference.

Or just hit delete."

Vignettes from Bonnie Berger's article in the *March Bulletin*

These vignettes will highlight challenges found on campuses today. Some responses are shared. Visit www.ringoutbigotry.com and share other responses and experiences.

#1

What about that Christmas tree in the college union? Although that would be unlikely to happen in this day and age, what could be done to avoid it?

- Training for all staff and student employees should include items related to multi-cultural awareness.
- Planning for the holidays should include discussions of how to be inclusive in as many ways as possible.
- Over the year, invite students from diverse backgrounds and cultures in the U.S. and internationally to staff meetings. Each meeting would have one speak for a short time about the most difficult issues for them to deal with on campus and in this country.

#2

How should the night class professor scheduling exams during Ramadan with no way for Muslim students to take it another time be handled?

Within your role as the “living room” of the campus, the place where all parts of the campus come together,

- Use communications to become the resource for the campus: develop a calendar with all activities religious and other holidays throughout the year. Make it available in a printed version and make it available throughout the college union, post it online and link each one to descriptions of the holiday, background about the holiday, more about the religion, culture and country (ies) in which it is found, etc.
- Use programs to educate, facilitate and serve as a model for multi-cultural awareness. For example, host programs for major holidays from other cultures. Rather than leaving it to each to hold them, advertise the entire series in one publication and on your Web site. Those who might be interested in the program because of holidays/customs familiar to them might be enlightened about other programs because they are listed together.
- Use facilities to inform and keep multi-cultural awareness “top of mind” for all who enter. Post signs to let visitors know when it is a certain holiday with appropriate program information and wishes for that group and their custom/celebration/observance.

#3

The program council primarily has Caucasian students on it and working on its committees. Since they are charged with developing programs that represent all students, you feel that diversifying those on the council and committees could broaden its view. Students from other backgrounds don't necessarily feel unwelcome, but neither do they feel sought out.

- Invite other more multi-cultural campus organizations to sponsor programs jointly. Be sure to share leadership. Invite them to co-sponsor more programs and/or do some annually.
- When hosting events that attract diverse students, be sure to let those in the audience know you are always looking for others to help with programs such as the one they are attending. Capitalize on their immediate interest and have ways for them to sign up right there.