

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE “**ACTION**” THAT YOUR GROUP DID?



WE TOOK OVER AN A.S MEETING.

“I WAS
HANDCU
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LED A
HUNGER
STRIKE
FOR 24
HOURS.”
— CHRIS
TEMBLA
DOR

STUDENTS FOR EOP!



Our project was a campaign that raised awareness on the lack of student support services for low-income and underrepresented students at San Jose State University (S.J.S.U). Our aim was to strengthen a coalition of community members that would advocate for the restoration of the Educational Opportunity Program, demanding a presidential directive acknowledging its significance and to learn about new models at other universities that would help transform the program on our campus.

What motivated you to become involved in it?

I was motivated by my own personal story as a first generation college student. I grew up in South Los Angeles, struggled to succeed in my education, worked several jobs, my parents worked blue collar jobs and I had few mentors to guide me through the collegiate experience. During this time I also worked extensively with youth in the east side who aspired to go to college and I did not want them to encounter the same pitfalls I was encountering. My intention was to help build

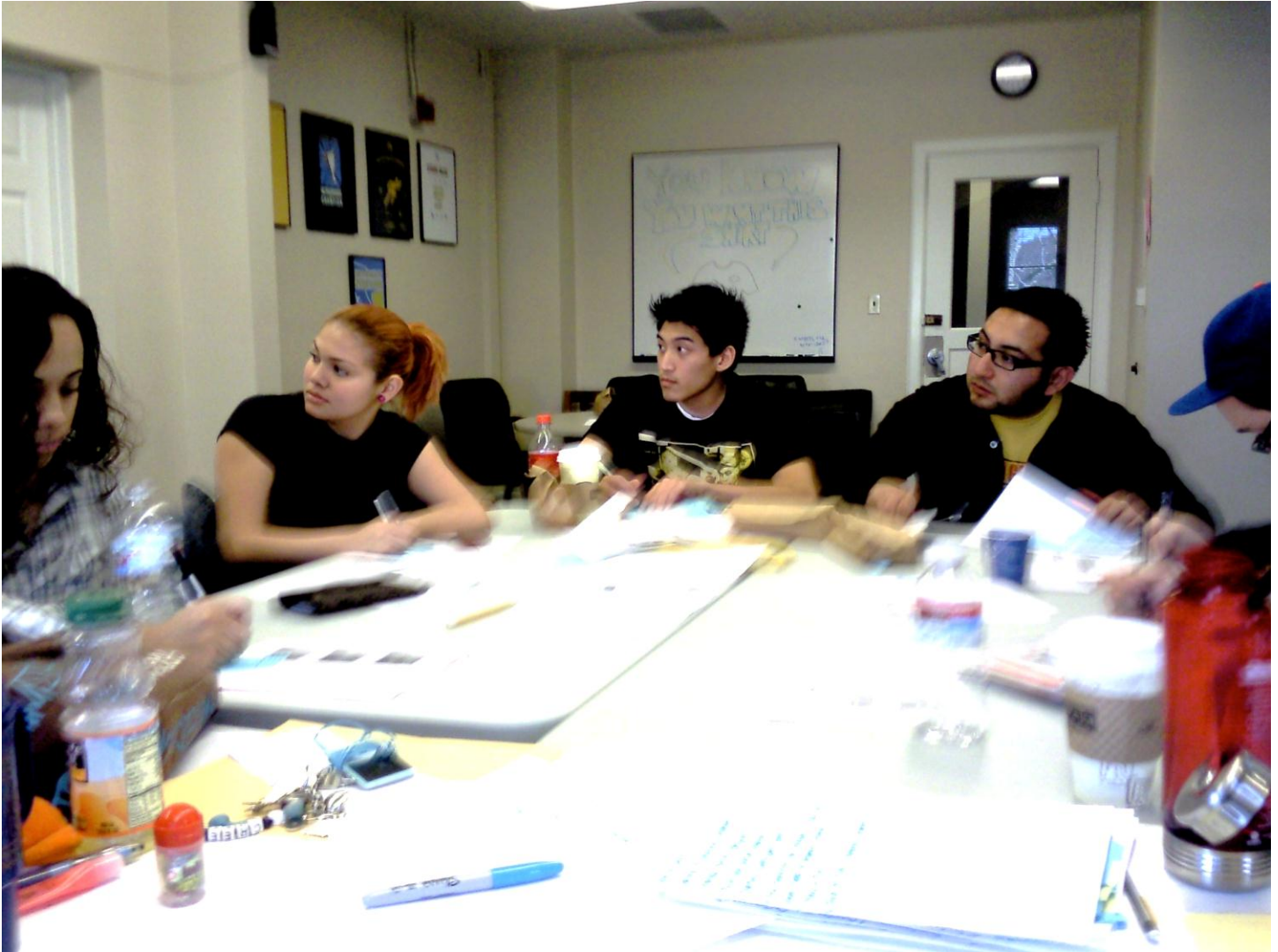


a strong support network for students who shared the same demographics, experiences and struggles so that they may reach graduation and ultimately become highly engaged members of society who would pay it forward. Most importantly, I wanted to do something significant with a group of my friends and have a great time doing it.



How did you recruit people for your campaign? What worked?

We worked on building allies with other groups who had similar objectives and leveraged our collective power to promote a massive campaign. We did this by attending independent events and hosting events together because it allowed us to actually build a closer relationship with our allies and potential members. This allowed us to form a unifying front that would carry a deeper message on campus during public forums and it also allowed each group to work independently on selective segments that they were passionate about. We also worked with the Cesar Chavez Community Action Center to share campaign information with student volunteers, staff and faculty members. Collaborating with faculty members and the Cesar Chavez Community Action Center worked best because it allowed us to inform a broader group of students without having to actively recruit, saving us time and energy.



How many leaders were in your group? Working members? General members? Paper members? Did you have enough of each to do "the work"?

There were two leaders in our group, one working member and three general members. The rest of our members were a mix of faculty, staff, and friends who always joined us at events, protests, and forums. It was challenging to work with a small group because the work sometimes felt overwhelming for such a small unit to accomplish. However, it made decision making less strenuous and we could delegate the work to others who only had time to attend an event or help us make banners.

How did your group make decisions? How did your group work together? What was your group dynamic? What did your group do to work together better?

Our group had a large age gap considering that we were a coalition of students, staff and faculty. At times there was red tape on things staff and faculty could do but our student arm was radical enough to take on the bold work when needed. However, our group did have a difficult time making critical decisions when it came to the interests of our coalition. As



students, we were all involved activists with a set of beliefs. In this collective of groups many personalities conflicted. Yet our student meetings always allowed for an open mic and an open space to dialogue about perspectives as well as shared responsibilities. We always alternated the facilitation of our meetings. At the end of the day we moved forward, surprisingly but sometimes only with a firm decision by the leader. Maybe it was the drinks we shared that kept us moving together. Really it was the dialogues we had on outings and the bonding allowed us to work better together because we got to know each other on a deeper level aside from work. This is was most important.



Who was your target, and what strategies did you use to get him/her/them to meet your demands? Were you successful in meeting your substantive and/or procedural demands?

Our main target was the president of the university. But first we needed to build a following and develop a platform to engage the issue on a larger level. That is why we began to target students first and inform them about the issue through networks, workshops, social events and activist spaces like the CCCAC or MOSAIC. To get to the next level, we started organizing protests, speaking at public forums and raising attention to the issue at other institutions. This made us successful in reaching our demands.

How did your background research help prepare you?

The background research was very important because we needed to know the context of EOP in regards to race, class, historical moments in education and previous work that was already done. This meant reading articles, books, journals, and going to meet with people. We also needed to learn how to start, run and develop a campaign. The book we read in class allowed us to train for our planning meetings. We also had resources that were shared by our professor, Scott Myers Lipton. When we came to class, the stories and challenges other students shared allowed us to gain more clarity on new methods. Ultimately, preparation was key. This is why we needed to learn how to hustle the information we needed by any means necessary.

What was your media strategy?

Our media strategy was focused on sharing photos on Facebook that showcased our actions, public forums and events. We also developed a series of you tube videos that were part mini series and part commercials. However, we also spoke at as many rallies as possible because of the audience and media attention present.



Did your group use technology? If so, please explain.

We used technology as part of our media campaign but we communicated with groups on campus more often in person. It allowed for a personal touch where we focused on building relationships. We then kept in contact via text or social media .

What did you learn from working on your issue? What did you learn about social change? about power? leadership? yourself? community, etc

This project demonstrated that social change is much more than a process, it is a movement that can only be led by a collective group of people unifying under a set of shared values. It starts with how we view the issue. The caveat is not letting the movement sway away from its objective but sometimes trusting that it will take its course. This is why having a firm and sincere leader is important to sustain the balance of power, more so the balance of opinions. Here I learned that as a leader, flexibility is important. A community will have its shared opinions or goals and not everyone will be happy with the tough decisions that will need to be made, but nevertheless, they have to be made. At one point, some one needs to be bold enough to take the heat and move the project forward.



What advice would you give current Soci. 164 Social Action students?

Share the mic and trust others to lead. Be creative and work towards the unthinkable. Leverage everything you can and make those critical decisions that people will envy you for. You will be surprised at how they may thank you for it later. Shake up the world!

What are you doing now? How does this project influence you in your job? or previous job (if not employed!)

I am a buyer for an aerospace company in Burbank, CA. My job is to provide our production and administrative team with the materials they need to complete their work. This project influenced the work I do in an unforeseeable way. Every day I have to work through challenges, assess the needs of others, think strategically, and find new creative methods to accomplish projects. In this work I also focus on upholding our aim towards social responsibility. When I acquire new eco-friendly materials that we integrate in our production, I take photographs of its use or impact to build a campaign around it so that it may influence the practices in the industry and our company.