

Center for Civic Justice

Advocacy to Action

Community Dialogue



Participate in productive civil discourse, discuss different ways to effectively create change in your community through activism, and consider varying perspectives on what advocacy looks like today.

February 28th | 7- 8:30PM
Union Ballroom

Terms & Definitions

ALLYSHIP:

the actions, practices, and behaviors that leaders take to support, amplify, and advocate with others despite not relating to the injustice

ACTIVIST:

Anyone who joins a campaign or movement to bring about political or social change

ADVOCATE:

Anyone who supports and shares knowledge on a particular cause of policy that promotes political or social change

AWARENESS:

Concern and/or well-informed interest in a particular situation or development

BOYCOTT:

Withdraw from commercial or social relations with (a country, organization, or person) as a punishment or protest

CAMPAIGN:

An organized course of action to achieve a goal

Terms & Definitions

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE:

The refusal to obey the demands or commands of a government or occupying power, without resorting to violence. Examples include sit-ins, marches, hunger strikes, etc.

GRASSROOTS:

Primarily made up of civilians advocating for a cause to spur change at local, national, or international levels

INTERSECTIONALITY:

The intersection of race, class, gender, and ability identities within each individual that informs how one views, discusses, and navigates through the world and the way each of us views and discusses the world

JUSTICE:

The quality of being just, righteousness, equitableness or moral rightness. Although it is objective, it can concern the quality of all having political, economic, and social rights and opportunities

MOBILIZATION:

The action of organizing and encouraging a group of people to take collective action in pursuit of a particular objective

Terms & Definitions

NONVIOLENT ACTION:

Methods of protest, resistance, and intervention without physical violence in which the members of the nonviolent group do, or refuse to do certain things

PERFORMATIVE ACTIVISM:

Superficial activism that focuses on the appearance of allyship rather than meaningful action

REFORM:

The act of creating internal change or modifications without removing an existing system.

MEDIA BIAS :

When news reporters and journalist allow their own opinions to influence the way they report, which can bring about negative rhetoric towards a group of people, things, places, etc.

MEDIA LITERACY:

The ability to access, observe, and analyze information on the media and also share and communicate information from oneself

What is Activism?

“Activism is the policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political and social change.”

The definition of activism can vary between people as the action of activism can take form in many different ways. Actions can include protest, voting, boycotting, fundraising, art and music, etc. Despite people partaking in different forms of activism, it is important to recognize that both big and small actions contribute to promoting change to the issue that is of concern. Ultimately, Activism is inclusive to all peoples and issues.



Types of Activism

Environmental



The actions of individuals or groups that aim to protect the natural world from harmful environmental practices. The efforts of environmental activism is promoted through local grassroots strategies to nationwide campaigns in efforts to ensure a future with a well fitting living environment for all.

Economic



The act of using one's wealth or economic power to bring about change. Economic activism is typically done by consumers who boycott or outbid the production of certain goods that do not align with their social, religious, or political values.

Political



The range of non-professional and voluntary activities performed by citizens that are primarily aimed at influencing decisions and outcomes at any level of the political system.

Social



Movements that often work outside the system by engaging in various types of protests. The goal of social activism is to work towards institutional reform, behaviors, relations, and expectations in society.

Examples:

- **Environmentalism** - A fourteen year old girl named Ta'Kaiya Blaney has cared deeply about the environment for a very long time. She's been singing songs about the environment since she was only four years old. She gives speeches at major conferences and is using her voice to advocate for environmental action.
- **Social Activism** - 2020 marks the rise of Black Lives Matter movement. This was a result of police brutality against African Americans. People in almost every state in the US protested against this issue. BLM was able to raise over 90 million dollars. Fundraising and protests are major examples of social activism.

What is Advocacy?

“Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others.”

Educate

Education and knowledge is the foundation for advocacy. In order to educate yourself and others, researching your issue and its impacts on your community is beneficial to improving your ability to be an advocate. The knowledge that is obtained can then be shared with fellow community members and elected officials to raise awareness.



Evaluate

Evaluating considers the goal and mission of the issue in which you are advocating for. Creating a set of ideas and strategies on how to produce change will help to ensure overall success of your campaign, movement, initiative , etc.

Collaborate

Collaborative efforts in advocacy concerns the forms of action that will be taken. Collaboration between people leads to the mobilization of your cause which can help produce change directly. Collaborative efforts can be done through training, education, conferences, nonpartisan voter education, public demonstrations, lobbying, and much more.

Activism through the Years

19th Century

19th Century activism was comprised of social reform in order to address the injustices witnessed in society. The most prevalent social reforms made during this era included abolitionism, prohibition, and women's suffrage. As many leaders of the movements shared the same ideologies and strategies many amendments were enacted as a result of their activism.

1783-1888: Abolitionism

The movement to end slavery and liberate enslaved people around the world. Led to the ratification of the 13th amendment in 1865.



1800s: Temperance Movement

Movement dedicated to promoting moderation and more often, complete abstinence in the use of intoxicating liquor. The movement led to the ratification of the 18th Amendment which prohibited the production and consumption of alcohol.



1791- 1804: Haitian Revolution

Series of conflicts between 1791 and 1804 between Haitian slaves, colonists, the armies of the British and French colonizers, and a number of other parties. This led to the independence of Haiti in 1804.

1840-1920: Women's Suffrage

The Women's Suffrage movement began at the 1848 Seneca Falls convention where women called for their guarantee to vote. In order to achieve suffrage women petitioned, marched, campaign, etc. They were later granted their right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

Activism through the Years

20th Century

The beginning of the 20th century is also known as the progressive era, in order to address the issues that accumulated in the 19th century. The call for progressive reform set the century up for a series of political and social movements which included immigration, urbanization, and the treatment of African Americans. Activism also took creative forms like sit-ins and freedom rides in order to meet the demand for change and justice.

1950s-1960s: Civil Rights Movement

Led by Martin Luther King Jr. the civil rights movement promoted the end of racial segregation in order to ensure equality for all African Americans nationwide. Despite oppositions, the use of marches, protests and campaigning led to desegregation of public institutions and facilities as well as outlawed racial discrimination.



1960s: Chicano Movement

In the 1960s, Mexican Americans began a social and political movement to promote their identity and end institutional racism. Leaders like Cesar Chavez became part of this movement by helping Mexican American farm workers to advocate for better wages and working conditions. The movement led to reform for migrant workers and the increase of Mexican American representation in politics.



1990: Capitol Crawl

On March 13, 1990, a group of disability rights activists cast aside their wheelchairs, crutches, and walkers and crawled or dragged themselves up the marble steps of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. This was a critical event leading to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) by President George H.W. Bush.

Activism through the Years

21st Century

21st Century differs from the previous centuries as it no longer is limited to traditional forms of activism. Through the advancement of technology and globalization, activism has evolved into a hybrid model that expands the opportunity for people to be informed and participate. As information has become more accessible, there has been a surge of global participation in movements.

2010: Arab Spring

The Arab Spring began when Tunisian Street vendor set himself on fire to end authoritarian rule and corruption. This led to a series of protest to achieve democracy and economic opportunity.



2017: Me Too Movement

A movement dedicated to create awareness of sexual harassment and sexual abuse of women in the workplace that grew in response to news reports of sexual abuse by American film producer Harvey Weinstein.



2013: Black Lives Matter

Dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence, especially in the form of police brutality. The name Black Lives Matter signals condemnation of the unjust killings of Black people.



2022: Women's Reproductive Rights

After the overthrow of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, there were heightened efforts to protect women's reproductive rights. Many called for state lawmakers to ensure rights for safe and legal abortion.

What is Virtue Signaling/Performative Activism?

Both virtue signaling and performative activism work simultaneously as they are empty displays in order to “increase one’s social capital or personal gain rather than genuine support towards a movement, issues, or causes” which is “intended to demonstrate one’s good character or social conscious”.



Noticing Performative Activism & Virtue Signaling

Users of performative activism often present themselves as “allies” when it is convenient for them in order to use it for their own personal gain or in attempt to avoid backlash and criticism from society. A common concern for users is being considered racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. therefore turning to simple actions instead of ones that are more likely to produce changes and combat systemic issues in our country and worldwide.

Examples

#Blackout Tuesday



While meant to show support and solidarity for the cause, the gesture brought along some negative effects, as the black squares flooded the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag, ultimately hiding important information regarding donations and petitions in the height of a very important movement. Although the purpose of the day wasn't ill-intended, it led many people to believe that posting a black square was sufficient in the fight against racism and shifted the conversation away from other posts from organizations and creators with educational resources.

Rainbow Capitalism



Many corporations use rainbow symbolism in their logos during Pride Month or sponsor pride parades, however do very little to champion LGBTQ+ rights outside of the month of June. They typically do not invest their efforts to advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and rainbow capitalism is more focused on profit and consumerism.

Allyship & Privilege in Activism



Allyship in activism refers to supporters who may not be directly impacted by the issue but seek to be aware and learn. Allies are typically not the original people who started the movement but have joined in solidarity and use their privilege as a form of contribution. It is important to recognize that privilege is intersectional which consists of factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, etc. therefore one can be more privileged in one group than the other. In order to help promote change, it is important to make aware of one's privilege and use them in forms of allyship to potentially provide resources for the community combating the issue and also learn at the same time.

Discussion Questions

- 1- Do you think that there is stigma associated with advocacy and activism? If yes, do you think this prevents people from getting involved in issues they care about?
- 2- What are other factors that would make it difficult/challenging for you to get involved in advocating for an issue? Are public demonstrations equally accessible to all groups? Are there groups who are more or less at risk during a public demonstration?
- 3- There is often criticism that some forms of activism are insufficient in creating change. Is there room for varying levels of involvement when it comes to activism? Is some involvement better than no involvement? Is there a 'right' way or a 'wrong' way to choose to participate?
- 4- Is there danger in only surrounding yourself with people who have similar beliefs and views? What sorts of rifts do polarized views create within communities, and how can people with different views have constructive dialogue?
- 5- Virtue signaling and performative activism are common criticisms of social media activism. How do you feel this impacts social movements?

The Media's Impact on Activism



Social media has become a tool and expanded the ability for activism to grow amongst local communities and globally overseas. The connection of people through social media has made information in certain movements more accessible leading more people to attend protest and events. As a result, there is more engagement and interaction with social issues. In addition, people are able to share their own stories rather than only main stream media, otherwise known as citizenship journalism.

Examples



Daniela Frazier, 17 years old, took the video of George Floyd and posted it on social media taking on the role as citizen journalist. This gave everyone access to this occurrence.



The use of #'s, from #METOO giving women a platform to hold violators accountable, to #ALS that created the ice bucket challenge and fundraised for a cause, #HANDSOFFMYHIJAB for women's right to expression.



Mohamed Bouazizi, Tunisian street vendor, grew irritated with his government, and as a form of protest set himself on fire. The recording quickly spread and incited a revolution, known as the Arab Spring.

Misinformation

The internet makes it easy for billions of people to access information with a few simple keystrokes. However, it also makes it easy to spread false information, which can have disastrous effects on both individuals and society as a whole.

Here are some things to look out for. Being able to identify possible misinformation will help prevent the use of harmful rhetoric towards an issue.

Clickbait

These are stories that are deliberately fabricated to gain more website visitors and increase advertising revenue for websites. Clickbait stories use sensationalist headlines to grab attention and drive click-throughs to the publisher website, normally at the expense of truth or accuracy.

Misleading Headlines

Stories that are not completely false can be distorted using misleading or sensationalist headlines. These types of news can spread quickly on social media since only headlines and small snippets of the full article are displayed on audience newsfeeds.



Satire/ Parody

Lots of websites and social media accounts publish fake news stories for entertainment and parody. For example; The Onion, Waterford Whispers, The Daily Mash, etc.

Propoganda

Stories that are created to deliberately mislead audiences, promote a biased point of view or particular political cause or agenda.

Bias/ Slanted News

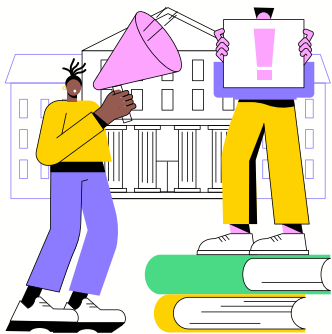
Many people are drawn to news or stories that confirm their own beliefs or biases and fake news can prey on these biases. Social media news feeds tend to display news and articles that they think we will like based on our personalized searches.

Activism on College Campuses

Over the years student groups have collaborated in innovative and creative ways to bring attention and advocate for issues concerning safety, tuition, discrimination, etc. Staying informed and understanding your University's policies is important when advocating because it guarantees your rights necessary in order to take action to create effective change.

“Time and time again, students have proved that when they are at the forefront of confronting institutional, oppression, effective change can happen.”

-Kelly Garcia, student at Depaul University



History of Activism on College Campuses



Four students from North Carolina A&T state university held a sit in 1960 at a “whites only” lunch counter, this inspired thousands of other students to partake in the movement.



In the 1980s, student activist marched against apartheid in South Africa.

This led to Columbia University selling all their stocks that were tied to the country and inspired many other student activist and universities to do as well.



In 2015 students in over 100 campuses protested against extremely high tuition and student debt. Later in 2019, UT Austin announced a new policy to cover tuition for anyone with an annual family income of less than \$65,000.



Since the 1970s, students have been advocating for safer campuses regarding gun laws. In 2017, students at New York University protested and rallied against gun violence.

Discussion Questions

1- Do you feel social media plays an active role in advocacy, what are some limitations or hurdles that may arise from social media as a form of activism?

2- How does media coverage affect your perception of certain issues and current events? Do you think that the media you consume is biased, and do you think it's necessary to counter that influence?

3- Do you feel that people who are not directly impacted by an issue have a responsibility to speak on the topic? How does privilege and allyship play a role in advocacy? Is educating yourself on an issue enough? Is the ability to ignore certain issues a privilege?

4- Do you think companies and public figures have a responsibility to make their views on social issues known to their audience? Does this influence your support or consumption of their content/products?

5- What forms of activism do you feel are successful in creating real change? Have you ever participated in advocating for an issue, big or small, that led to the desired result you were looking for? What lessons did you learn from that experience that you felt led to your efforts being successful?

Resources

Media literacy

Fact checking information



Stony Brook University has fact checking resources available for students in order to help reduce the spread of misinformation. The resources below provide information how to understand and recognize fake news!



Media Bias Information

Stony Brook's Digital Resource Center provides a series of media bias information where students can learn how to recognize and avoid bias in efforts to encourage media literacy.





Resources

Civic Engagement



Voting Information

Take action by voting!

Scan here to visit [Vote.org](https://www.vote.org) to check your voting registration status and polling location. As well as learn who is on your ballot and their stances on important issues for the upcoming elections so you can be sure to make your vote count !



Democracy 101

Democracy 101 allows for all Stony Brook students to participate in multiple civic engagement related events and initiatives during their time at Stony Brook and graduate with a well-rounded understanding of democratic engagement and its importance in society.

Contacting Elected Officials

Contacting elected officials can be beneficial to serving your cause. To learn more on why and how to contact elected officials join us at Democracy 101, a program aimed to encourage students to be civically engaged and participate in the democratic process.



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