

PLANNING A KICKOFF MEETING

Your core team and basic strategic plan is the foundation for your campaign, but you won't really pick up steam until you launch the campaign publicly. To do that, we suggest a kickoff meeting. A kickoff meeting is a public meeting to share the story of your campaign, build your base, and launch into a new semester or phase of work powerfully. Your kickoff meeting should take place as close to the beginning of a semester as possible, to allow you to build from there.

A kickoff meeting is set up to accomplish three goals:

1. **To create a space for people to learn about and join your efforts.** Think of a kick off as a supercharged info session for new members -- you're introducing them to the campaign and your politics, giving them a first action to take by coming to the meeting, and creating clear onramps for them to officially "join" your team.
2. **To announce your campaign publicly to the campus community.** Your kick off will likely be your first major event on campus for the semester, so it's both an introduction for your allies and your target. To make sure you're showing your power at such an early stage in the campaign, you want to make sure your messaging is clear and the number of people in the room is formidable. Recruitment for this event is important -- be sure to set some goals for how many people you think you need to flex your power on campus.
3. **To build your core team.** In recruiting for your kickoff meeting, you likely have a handful of new people joining your team before the meeting itself. You can use your agenda to plug the most dedicated new people into critical roles for your campaign: research, recruitment, action and event planning, press and digital support, etc. Try setting them up to lead breakout groups at the meeting for the different working groups in your campaign team. This may build buy-in to new roles and confidence in their own leadership. Be sure to debrief with all the folks involved in planning and running the meeting to assess how your new team is working together.

Sample Kick-off Meeting Agenda:

- 10 min: People arrive and settle in, sign in (key!), and maybe go through some guided introductions.
- 10 min: Headline speaker to pump people up (supportive professor, or other public figure)
- 10 min: Intro to the campaign - What are you trying to accomplish? Who is with you? What is the national or global context? What is the local context? What is the political context? Paint the vision of where you are going together!

- 10 min: Walk through public plans for the semester and the roles needed to make it all happen. Then have several working groups break out to accomplish some next steps.
- 20 min: Working group breakouts (Recruitment, Digital, Research, Event Planning, etc.). Make sure you have a member or two of your core team ready to facilitate the working groups toward some easy, clear outcomes!
- 10 min: Report-backs and next steps announced, including the time of the next meeting.

NOTE: Remember to follow up with everyone who attends your kick-off meeting or RSVP'ed yes! This could be done by the people who facilitated the working group breakout they joined. No one should leave your meeting without a clear ask for their next step to engage.