

TIPS ON WORKING IN COALITIONS

Your organization is passionate about organizing on a particular issue. You also know that there are other groups who are concerned, who may or may not be working on the same issues. In order to increase your power and resources, and to build a strong, unified movement on campus, you decide to build a diverse coalition. Here are tried and true guidelines for successful coalition building:

Solidarity goes both ways.

Building coalitions does not just mean that you convince other organizations to join your campaign. Solidarity and coalition means a **reciprocal** relationship with other organization where you have each others' backs.

Listen first, talk later.

When approaching other organizations to build a coalition, first ask them what they are working on and how your organization can support them. Attend meetings, rally people to go out to the other organizations' events, and build trust before you ask them to support your campaign.



Support other Campaigns by finding connections:

There are many different issues that people are going to be working on, and each issue is most important to a certain organization for a variety of reasons. Rather than trying to convince a group that your campaign is the most important, think about ways in which your groups' campaigns intersect.

Note to Student Activists:

When there is an existing worker-led campaign, we should follow the lead of the workers and show support and solidarity where it is helpful. Students seeking assistance in working with labor, contact your local Jobs with Justice Coalition, another labor/community coalition, and/or SLAP.

Collectively establish "points of unity" for the coalition.

"Points of unity" are the fundamental ideas a coalition agrees on (respect, ideologies, etc.) that hold the coalition together and help guide its work.

Respect each group's internal process.

Every group has its own way of making decisions. Don't rush them. However, we do work within timelines so setting reasonable deadlines for decisions to be made by is necessary.

Make sure that everyone is comfortable with tactics.

All groups should be comfortable with tactics. There are some advantages to encouraging the more militant groups to go off and do their thing independently.

Distribute credit fairly.

The coalition itself needs to get the larger share of publicity or credit. Otherwise the whole isn't greater than the sum of the parts. Make sure that all organizations are equally credited when applicable, though.