

## **How to Start a ‘Students for Nader’ Campus Chapter**

### **⇒ The Importance of Organizing on Campuses**

The Nader campaign addresses issues that concern young people: the destruction of our environment, budget cuts at our schools, the exploitation of workers around the world, the unlawful war and occupation of Iraq, the commercialization of our culture, and more. There is only one presidential candidate who has pledged and stood for the people. And if that candidate, Ralph Nader, can achieve the same exposure as the major party, corporate candidates, he could be the next President of the United States of America.

Our campaign will be successful because we are organizing at the grassroots level. We are calling on students to help this mobilization. Similar to the student-led action during the civil rights movement and Vietnam war protests of the 1960s, the anti-apartheid efforts of the 1980’s, and the anti-sweatshop movement of the 1990’s, we the students, can participate in our democracy, and be a powerful force for political change.

We have the candidate, the people, and the energy.

With the effort, Ralph Nader can win the student vote!

### **⇒ Schedule**

#### **Spring**

- Launch Students for Nader campus chapter
- Get involved with ballot access efforts by contacting your statewide coordinator
- Schedule student events, include media and press

#### **Summer**

- Volunteer/Intern for the campaign by connecting with your statewide coordinator
- Continue ballot access drive
- Register student voters

#### **Fall**

- Table at Student Activities Fair
- Organize Get Out the Vote drive, registering student voters
- Organize, promote and attend Nader Rallies
- Schedule student events, include media and press

### **⇒ Recruitment**

There can be no victory in November without successful organizing this spring and summer. As the only campaign that aims to represent people and not corporate giants,

political resources at the disposal of the Nader campaign are limited. As such, it is vital that we seek everyone who can and is willing to help our independent movement.

Needless to say, volunteer recruitment is paramount. To defeat the legions of dollars pouring into the major candidates it is essential that we mobilize an army of passionate volunteers applying their talents to renew our democracy.

### ⇒ **Campus Kick-off Event**

Whether you have already begun recruiting enthusiastic Nader supporters at your campus or are reading this pamphlet for initial inspiration, you should plan on joining dozens of other schools around the country in organizing a Campus Kick-off Event.

Use the kick-off as a way to organize your primary corps of student volunteers. The meeting can start with brief introductions of everyone present, a sharing of reasons to support Ralph, and an outline of the events and goals for your group.

If your state presents a ballot access hurdle it is imperative that for the remainder of the Spring you focus on signature gathering. *If this is the case, contact your state coordinator as soon as possible to get plugged in with the statewide volunteer drive.* Go to [http://www.votenader.org/ballot\\_access/index.php](http://www.votenader.org/ballot_access/index.php) and find out.

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Event ideas are linked through the website,  
[http://www.votenader.org/sfn/downloads/event\\_descriptions.php](http://www.votenader.org/sfn/downloads/event_descriptions.php).  
Alternative ideas are welcomed, please share them via email.

Remember to get names, phone numbers and emails of interested students at the event.  
Ask each person who signs up if they are affiliated with another student organization.  
Extend an invitation to the members of that organization to help with the campaign. This is useful for coalition building.

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**Note: Campus events cannot be supported with any funds from the campaign, from a university, from local non-profits, or from any other corporation. Campus volunteer events are in no way meant to be campaign events or fundraisers for the campaign. Please do not raise any money for the campaign. If you spend any money you must do so as individuals and not as pooled resources or as a university funded group. If a volunteer spends more than \$1000 they will need to register with the Federal Election Commission. Go to their website for additional registration information, [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov).**

## ⇒ 5 Ways to Recruit Potential Volunteers Thru the Spring and into the Fall

**TABLING:** Tabling can be one of the best methods for getting new people involved with the Nader campaign on your campus. It is also suitable as the ongoing activity to educate a large number of people in a short amount of time.

- Get the appropriate permission. You need to call your school's student activities office for details on what locations on campus are open to use.
- Location is KEY. Try to set up your tabling operation in a high traffic area like outside of cafeterias, the library, or the gym. Table during times that you know people will pass by, MORE PEOPLE, MORE AWARENESS.
- Tabling does not have to involve a table. Try using an ironing board or some other contraption that you can lay out materials on.
- Always have volunteer signup sheets ([http://www.votenader.org/sfn/resources/signup\\_campus.pdf](http://www.votenader.org/sfn/resources/signup_campus.pdf)) ready for anyone that expresses interest. Organized collection of contact names is essential to good campus coordination.
- Prepare a short tabling presentation and distribute a copy to the new volunteers. The presentation should include an introductory question, a description of the Nader 2004 platforms, and a call to action. Keep it short and upbeat.
- Have informational material ([http://www.votenader.org/sfn/downloads/ralph\\_on\\_the\\_issues.pdf](http://www.votenader.org/sfn/downloads/ralph_on_the_issues.pdf)) out for distribution. A large colorful banner will help tell people why you're tabling.
- Work in teams. Arrange your tabling schedule so that you always have between two and three people at your table.
- Don't spend too much time talking to one person, but don't cut people off either. Don't waste your time arguing politics with people who obviously disagree with you – at least while potential supporters are present.

**FLYERS:** Download sample flyers from our website

([http://www.votenader.org/sfn/downloads/ralph\\_on\\_the\\_issues.pdf](http://www.votenader.org/sfn/downloads/ralph_on_the_issues.pdf)). Since you are probably short on resources you should concentrate on putting up flyers in the areas with the highest traffic. Make sure to include your contact information as well as the next meeting time and location on the flyer. Also, chalk main quads with info!

- Promote Dorm Storms and Faculty Raids, put flyers in every Professor's box and under every dorm room door.

**CANVASSING:** Door-to-door canvassing is a great tool if used properly. The main requirements of a good canvasser are quite simple: common sense, courtesy, and commitment. Remember, students are either studying or partying in their room – either way, they probably don't want to be disturbed for long.

- Dorm canvassing works best when you have a large group of canvassers. With about 10 or 20 people you can cover a large area and have fun. Meet at a central location and pair up. Teams of two always work better because both people can answer questions and any pressure is divided between the two.
- Predetermine what dorm(s) you will be covering. As with everything else, you always need a plan. Assign canvass “turf” to each pair (i.e., the floors or rooms that they will cover, use maps if necessary). Make sure everyone knows what they are expected to do and try to motivate everyone before sending them off.
- Set goals for how many rooms/floors you want each team to canvass. Remind everyone to keep this goal in mind when talking to people.
- Make sure you have signup sheets, flyers, issue summaries, voter registration cards, and other informational material ready for all the canvassers. (<http://www.votenader.org/sfn/>)
- Like a good tabling talk, canvassing talk should be concise, informative, and upbeat. Don't try to cram all of Ralph's ideas into a quick speech.
- Spend time talking to people who seem interested in Nader 2004. Avoid wasting time arguing with people who just want to argue – you're probably not going to convince them and you could be using that time more productively talking to someone who is interested.
- Invite everyone who is supportive, persuadable and undecided to your next meeting (where you will do everything in your power to make them 100% Nader supporters!). Have these details available.
- Leave information under the door for people who aren't home – again, be sure that the flyer includes information about your next meeting.
- Have everyone meet at a designated time at your central location to wrap up the canvassing effort. Find out what worked and what didn't, prepare for next time.

**MEDIA:** Campus media provides an easy way to spread the word about your campus chapter and national Nader campaign.

- Get contact information for your school's newspaper, radio station, TV station, and any other form of media that you have.

- Campus media frequently give their reporters a lot of liberties with what they cover. If you know of a Nader supporter who works as a reporter, try to get her/him to cover pro-Nader happenings. If you don't already know someone who can serve this role, find someone from within your group to specialize on press coverage.
- A press liaison should be present at all of your events to seek out the reporters, make statements, and direct them to other spokespeople in your organization. You don't want to let a reporter get away without a pocket full of good quotes.
- Everyone that talks to the media should be well versed on the issues. If a member of your team is asked a question that she/he cannot answer, she/he should simply say "I don't know."
- If you do not get positive coverage – or any coverage for that matter – use this to our advantage. Organize a media campaign explaining the bias that exists in the campus coverage.
- Make sure that you contact your newspaper's editors and your radio/TV station's producers at least one week in advance of an event and ask them to assign someone to write a story about it. Also, many media provide free announcements listings. Find out what you have to do to get all of your events listed and do it!
- Write letters to the editor of your campus newspaper and write op-ed or guest columnist pieces. Have a variety of people, including professors, write in support of Ralph. This could be done at one of your meetings.
- Prepare events to suit photographing and videotaping. Have signs and banners with our website, [votenader.org](http://votenader.org), prominently displayed. "Nader for President 2004" or something similar should appear in every photograph or taping.
- Develop short statements with quotable lines that include Ralph's name. Reporters love one-liners, so use this to our advantage.
- Make every effort to plug the campaign's Web Site ([www.votenader.org](http://www.votenader.org)) and your own group's contact information when someone contacts the media. If TV or radio interviews you, mention the Web Site and your local contact information several times throughout the interview. If you are interviewed by print media, ask the reporter if the contact information can be listed at the end of the article. They may not often agree, but it doesn't hurt to ask.

**CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Many professors will devote a few minutes of class time to announcements if you ask beforehand. This is a great opportunity to get the word out about your campus group and to encourage interested students to talk to you.

## ⇒ Voter Registration

Since 1972, when the 26th amendment allowed eighteen year olds the right to vote, the percentage of eighteen to twenty-four year olds who have voted in general elections has been remarkably low, peaking at 43 percent in 1992 and bottoming out in 1998 at 12 percent. With voter apathy so high, especially among youth, it is no wonder that our government has repeatedly been able to choose corporate interests over the concerns of its people.

One way we will win this election is by convincing these non-voters that participating in their democracy and casting their vote for Nader can and will make a difference. Recently, voter registration campaigns targeting youth have been only mildly successful largely because of the lack of choice and disenchantment with the two-party system. Our voter registration campaign can, and will be different. Why? Because our candidate is offering legitimate change, and incentive for non-voters to participate.

## ⇒ Coalition Building

Ralph Nader's candidacy inspires people of every background. If you feel so inclined, connect with other colleges and universities near you and promote the campaign together. We must get as many students as possible, nationwide, supporting Nader 2004.

- Map out all colleges and universities throughout your state or region: Go to [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com) and do an Education Search ⇒ Find a College ⇒ Search by Location. Or check out Yahoo.com.
- Identify point person and/or groups on each campus and ask them to be a campus coordinator: Search schools by organizations and clubs for contact information ⇒ Send emails and follow-up phone calls, record pertinent information ⇒ Link them to the Students for Nader web page to launch their chapter.

Some groups to consider include environmental forums, gay and lesbian student organizations, ethnic and minority associations, peace initiatives, women's studies groups, campus worker's unions, and anti-sweatshop groups. This is only a partial list. Contact the relevant campus office to gather a complete list of campus groups and open a dialogue. When contacting a campus organization, present the Nader campaign platform and explain why it is relevant. Ask skeptics who else among Presidential candidates is pulling for them and against the corporate interests who are pulling heavily in the other, greedy and mean, direction?

Stay current on the campaign issues page (<http://www.votenader.org/issues/index.php>) and remember to be knowledgeable and sensitive when approaching other college campus groups.

**⇒⇒ Important Note for your Sanity:**

- While this is a lot of information, don't despair. Your main priority as Campus Coordinator is to DELEGATE. Volunteers are there to help you, assign tasks to other students.
- Relax, have fun, and be organized.
- TAKE PICTURES and VIDEOTAPE your Kick-off, we will post selected activities and events on our web site.
- Thank you for committing to the campaign.