SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

SPLC ON CAMPUS

About the Southern Poverty Law Center

The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal oportunity will become a reality.

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SPLC | ON CAMPUS

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At the Southern Poverty Law Center, a dynamic team of civil rights lawyers and staff members is dedicated to fighting hate, teaching tolerance, and seeking justice.

A Commitment to Justice & Equality

SPLC on Campus is a program sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in Montgomery, Alabama. Civil rights lawyers Morris Dees and Joseph Levin Jr. founded the SPLC in 1971 to ensure that the promise of the Civil Rights Movement became a reality for all. Since then, the SPLC has won numerous landmark legal victories on behalf of the exploited, the powerless, and the forgotten.

The SPLC's Intelligence Project is known for tracking and exposing the activities of hate groups and other domestic extremists. Its Teaching Tolerance program supports educators by producing and distributing – free of charge – anti-bias documentary films, books, lesson plans, and other materials that seek to reduce prejudice and promote educational equity in our nation's schools.

SPLC on Campus is the SPLC's newest program. Since our launch in 2015, we have empowered college students across the country to become more engaged in our democracy, fight hate on campus, educate their peers on issues that divide us, and speak out for justice.

MICHELLE LELAND

Table of Contents

CREATING AN SPLC ON CAMPUS CLUB 4

SPLC ON CAMPUS FOCUS AREAS 5

WHAT YOU CAN DO 8

TERMS AND CONDITIONS 10

Creating an SPLC on Campus Club

Creating an SPLC on Campus club at your college or university allows you to partner with an internationally recognized civil rights organization to create change on your campus and in your community. The first step is to register your club at **splconcampus.org/register**. Once your club is registered, you'll receive free resources and staff support.

All SPLC on Campus clubs must adhere to the four guidelines below. Organizers are encouraged to structure their club to fit the needs of their campus community. Please contact the SPLC on Campus coordinator at splconcampus@splcenter.org with questions about how to structure your club.

1. Each club must be recognized by your college or university as a registered student organization. This process can vary based on your institution and may be lengthy, but benefits can include meeting space, funding, recruitment opportunities, and a sense of continuity from year to year.

2. Each club must have a staff/faculty advisor. There is no requirement that the advisor represents a particular department or office at your school.

3. SPLC on Campus clubs are prohibited from collecting dues or charging fees for SPLC on Campus events.

4. SPLC on Campus clubs are required to host at least one event during the academic year related to one of the four SPLC on Campus focus areas (see pages 5-7).

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR CLUB

Social media is a great tool for publicizing your club as well as local and national news relevant to college students. SPLC on Campus clubs can be found on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

When considering a social media account for your organization, it's important to make sure you have the time and ability to maintain the account. Find a club member who's interested in social media and see if he or she is willing to manage the account. We recommend starting with one social media platform before adding additional platforms.

Once you've decided it's time to create a social media page, email **splconcampus@splcenter.org** with information about the type of social media account you plan to create and we'll send custom graphics. You may not use the SPLC's trademarked logo as your club's social media image.

When naming your organization, please use the following model: University Name-SPLC on Campus Club. If you have any questions about your organization's name or social media, email **splconcampus@splcenter.org**.

Make sure your social media accounts – and your members – follow the SPLC and SPLC on Campus Facebook pages. We'll share stories and updates relevant to our work and the SPLC on Campus's focus areas.

FACEBOOK

SPLC on Campus Focus Areas

SPLC on Campus clubs can help advance the SPLC's pursuit of justice and equality by planning events and organizing around our four focus areas. Clubs are, of course, encouraged to pursue issues that motivate them – even if they are outside these focus areas:

RACIAL JUSTICE

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

LGBTQ RIGHTS

RACIAL JUSTICE

College students are speaking out against racial bias in its many forms, from profiling by law enforcement to implicit and explicit bias in the classroom. They are also demanding that racist symbols be removed from their local communities and that the names of buildings and monuments that memorialize known racists be changed. At a time when the voices of white nationalists are being amplified and normalized, many students are speaking out and protesting hate speech on campus.

Racial injustice has long been an issue in the United States. People of color often disproportionately face segregated and underfunded schools, the school-to-prison pipeline, and a discriminatory criminal justice system.

The school-to-prison pipeline – unnecessary suspensions, expulsions and school-based arrests of children – is just one way that systemic racism pervades across the country and often cuts a child's education short and increases the likelihood of incarceration. Additionally, the criminal justice system is one marred by vast racial disparities, as people of color are often unfairly targeted by law enforcement.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Millennials and college students often face unique financial problems, and there has been a lot of organizing around issues such as affordable college tuition, higher minimum wages, and the social safety net. Graduate student employees continue to fight for better pay and benefits, and students across the country speak out against income inequality.

Poor people in the United States are not only facing an economic gap – they're facing a justice gap. Too often, they're exploited and abused simply for being poor. They're victimized by predatory lenders who trap them in a cycle of debt and rob them and their communities of resources. They're denied access to the social safety net by politicians who stigmatize low-income workers and blame them for our country's problems. At the same time, many of them are exploited and imprisoned by local governments that target impoverished communities for revenue-generating traffic fines – and by companies that seek to profit by charging fees for improper but court-ordered "services" like payment plans.

IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

In response to the spread of racist and xenophobic rhetoric as well as the massive increase in deportations in recent years, many college students are standing up for the rights and dignity of immigrants. More and more colleges and cities have made headlines recently by standing out and declaring themselves sanctuaries so they may protect undocumented immigrants studying and living there.

Immigrants perform some of the hardest, most dangerous jobs in our economy – too often for the least amount of pay. Despite this, they're routinely denied basic protections in the workplace. In their communities, they're subjected to racial profiling and harassment by law enforcement, as well as being frequently forced to prove themselves innocent of immigration violations, regardless of their legal status. Their children, many of them U.S. citizens or longtime members of the community, are often denied school enrollment or educational services.

LGBTQ RIGHTS

Though state legislatures all over the country have been pushing anti-trans legislation in recent years, students are working with a variety of progressive groups to defeat such bills. Further, students are often fighting against anti-LGBTQ discrimination in their communities and fighting for safe spaces on their campuses.

Despite progress across the United States, there are still many places in this country where employers can fire or refuse to hire people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTQ people are also vulnerable to discrimination in public accommodations or housing, and members of the community are frequently victimized by violent hate crimes. In addition, LGBTQ youth often encounter harassment and bullying in school, and they typically make up a disproportionate percentage of homeless youth throughout the county.

These issues are very much a part of the work done by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and we encourage students to work together with each other and with other groups on campus to organize and be advocates for justice and equality for all.

SAMUEL CORUM/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES (PROTEST); KATHERINE HAAS | OPELIKA-AUBURN NEWS (RALLY); AP PHOTO/ERIC GAY (GIRL); SAMUEL KUBANI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (FLAGS)

What You Can Do

College is the perfect time to delve deeply into social justice issues and become an advocate for change. There are a variety of activities an SPLC on Campus club can engage in to address issues within the community.

BE A GRASSROOTS ADVOCATE

Before taking action for social justice, you should first learn as much as you can about the issue and community where you wish to work. Researching a social justice topic takes a number of forms – interviews with people in the community, reading books and scholarly research, watching a documentary, attending a conference, and much more.

Although it may seem daunting, it's best to become knowledgeable about a variety of issues so you can learn ways to best serve your community. Never assume that you will know everything or have a solution – becoming an advocate is a constant learning process, so leave room to learn even more along the way. Always be willing to accept criticisms, suggestions, and changes, and join with other groups on campus to build intersectional coalitions and collaborate effectively.

HOST A FILM SCREENING AND START A DISCUSSION

The SPLC has created numerous original documentaries on civil rights issues, and there are also plenty of other worthwhile documentaries about social justice issues from other organizations. Consider screening a film free-of-charge and begin a dialogue about the issues it raises. Visit **tolerance.org/teaching-kits** for a complete list of our Teaching Tolerance films, and contact us at **splconcampus@splcenter.org** to request a copy.

Eastern Kentucky University students promote their SPLC on Campus club.

SPEAK OUT AGAINST BIAS AND BIGOTRY

Prepare your SPLC on Campus club to respond to acts of intolerance and hate they may encounter, and learn how to become effective bystanders when you witness street harassment and hate speech. Dedicate a club meeting to a discussion about bias and your campus's climate, as well as ways you can make a difference simply by making your voice heard. Several resources can be found at **splconcampus.org/resources**, including a special edition of SPEAK UP!, designed to help students respond to everyday bigotry, as well as a guide to effective bystander intervention while witnessing street harassment and a detailed report on the so-called Alt-Right and their on-campus recruitment.

BE ENGAGED IN DEMOCRACY

Much of the legislation concerning social justice issues is decided on in Congress or in state legislatures all over the country without much input from the people. As college students, you have a greater opportunity than ever before to speak out and be heard. Call on your legislators to represent you and your needs at the federal, state, and local level, and organize with other students to fight for justice and against legislation that would further oppress the most vulnerable in society. Even when it is not an election year, voting rights and voting registration are important; plan voter registration drives ahead of local and national elections, and make sure that your clubs are engaged with important issues both on and off campus.

SPLC on Campus members at LSU register voters in 2016 (top left). SPLC on Campus @ Auburn University visit the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama (top right). Clemson students gather to hear DACA students tell their stories at an event co-sponsored by SPLC on Campus @ Clemson University (bottom right).

Terms & Conditions

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality.

The SPLC encourages college and university students and faculty who share the SPLC's mission to form an SPLC on Campus club, provided they agree to comply with these guidelines:

1. The SPLC on Campus club will further the SPLC's goals by raising awareness of the growth and activities of hate and extremists groups, laws and policies that deprive people of their civil and human rights, and by promoting an atmosphere of acceptance and respect on campus and in the community. The SPLC Club will further the SPLC's goals through activities such as:

a) Identifying issues that the SPLC Club feels are relevant to the campus community and then working to improve the campus climate through education, discussion, and activities;
b) Planning events such as speaker panels, film screenings, and policy change activities to help raise awareness in the larger school community;
c) Sponsoring a Mix It Up event to break down barriers between students and improve intergroup relations;
d) Promoting a campus-wide dialogue about the release of SPLC's annual active hate group count; and
e) Using the SPLC's Teaching Tolerance materials to foster understanding and respect for individuals and the community's diversity.

2. The SPLC Club acknowledges that it is organized and operated independently of the SPLC and is not a part of the SPLC or Teaching Tolerance. The SPLC Club agrees that SPLC shall not be responsible for the statements or conduct of any SPLC Club; the officers, members, volunteers, or others associated with the SPLC Club; or the participants in any activities sponsored by the SPLC Club.

3. The SPLC Club will comply with all applicable laws and all institutional rules governing campus clubs.

4. The SPLC requires all SPLC clubs to have a faculty advisor.

5. The SPLC Club shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

6. If the SPLC Club holds a fundraising event or activity for the SPLC, the SPLC Club will instruct donors to make payments directly to the SPLC, and donations collected by the SPLC Club in the name of the SPLC shall be sent to:

Southern Poverty Law Center,
400 Washington Ave.,
Montgomery, AL 36104 or another address subsequently provided by the SPLC.

Contributions to the SPLC made as part of fundraising events or efforts sponsored by any SPLC Club may be eligible for a tax deduction as a charitable contribution if the contributions are directed to the SPLC, but a contribution made instead to an SPLC Club may not be treated as a tax-deductible charitable contribution to the SPLC.

If the SPLC Club operates in compliance with these guidelines, the SPLC will permit the SPLC Club to use the "Southern Poverty Law Center" or "SPLC" name in the name of the club (for example the "[University Name] Southern Poverty Law Center Club"), and the SPLC will provide educational materials, information, and suggestions about possible SPLC Club activities and similar support for the SPLC Club. However, the SPLC will generally not be able to provide any financial support to the SPLC Club. The SPLC may revoke the right to use the "Southern Poverty Law Center" or "SPLC" name from any campus group that violates these guidelines or for any reason the SPLC deems reasonable.

The SPLC may revise these guidelines for SPLC Clubs as it sees fit. These guidelines were last reviewed on March 2, 2017.

Acknowledgements

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