



## **Campaigning Techniques**

Over the years, campaigning organisations have experimented with methods to make their campaign stand out from the others. For example, “Fathers 4 Justice” generated lots of publicity by climbing famous sites whilst dressed up as superheroes.

Here are a range of techniques that you could try using to make your campaign stand out from the rest.

### **Letter writing**

You can write a letter as an individual, raising your concerns with decision-makers or developing contacts. This can often be an effective way of drawing attention to a certain situation.

At the beginning of your campaign, writing letters can be crucial in raising awareness of your issue. The first letter could be from the Campaign Leader. Try to make contact with those who have influence, as well as other groups and individuals who may benefit from the campaign too.

A large number of letters can be a good way of demonstrating the extent of awareness and concern with the issue. The best type of model is where the basic facts are the same on each letter, but there is room for people to include a personal message. It is important that letters highlight individual concerns as the person receiving the letters will pay much less attention to them if they all look the same.

### **Postcards**

Pre-printed postcards can be another way of gathering support for your campaign. The postcards should carry the basic facts of the campaign. On the other side you can have anything from attention grabbing picture to a direct campaign message.

Postcards can be distributed in various methods, such as on campaign stalls, inserted in newsletters and posted in pigeonholes.

### **Alumni/Celebrity support**

Getting well-known alumni and celebrities to support your campaign can help influence opinions of others on issues. Identified “role models” can increase awareness and support for your campaign.

### **Writing to the press**

Letters sent to student press editors can be very effective in raising the profile of a campaign. Student press is not only read by students, but also other audiences, such as UCL staff, local residents, and alumni. It is crucial to remember that when you do

write a letter to student press that you are sure of any facts or figures you may have included in your letter.

### **Petitions**

Petitions can be an effective and cheap way of rallying support for your campaign. They can also be a very useful method for showing how large your support is, especially if you get as many people as possible to sign.

As well as gathering support, a petition can also raise awareness of the campaign and increase understanding of the campaign objectives.

When designing your petition, make the statement clear so people can understand the issue.

Previous campaigns have used sites such as [change.org/](https://change.org/) to launch their petitions.

### **Leaflets/Flyers**

Leafleting can be an effective way to raise the profile of your issue. You can present information about your campaign in a simple and accessible way. Leaflets might be useful if you plan to have a stand on campus, particularly if you are trying to get people to sign a petition.

Some tips on making leaflets:

- try to limit the information to three key points
- put details on any meetings, events, etc. clearly on the leaflet
- always include your contact details

### **Panel Debate/Guest Speaker**

Make sure you are clear about the purpose of the event you want to hold and what you want to achieve with it. Speakers could involve anyone, however well-known speakers who have an interest in your campaign will draw more attention and press coverage of the event.

### **Holding student meetings**

A good meeting is one where people leave feeling motivated and committed to our campaign. Before planning a student meeting, you need to consider what you want to achieve from the meeting, who you want to target and whether the speaker(s) will attract an audience.

The success of the meeting depends a lot on the audience and the audience you want to attract has to know about the meeting to attend it. Publicising the meeting well in advance is crucial. Target the publicity at the audience that you are hoping to attract, use posters, leaflets, press releases, lecture shout outs and by taking to people.

### **Holding a demonstration or a lobby**

These can be a great way to get publicity, especially if a large number of people attend. Always think about how others will perceive your action, and whether this will help or hinder your campaign.

Send out a press release before the event to make sure that the student press know about it should they want to report on it.

### **Direct action**

This is a campaigning method where the people involved take action which has a direct impact on the situation. For example, staging a sit-in or boycotting goods.

Direct action may involve breaking the law. If you are in any doubt, you should seek legal advice before taking direct action.

### **Using the media**

The media is one of the best ways of reaching big audiences and getting your campaigning messages across.

There are many reasons why you might want to seek publicity for your campaigning activities:

- to publicise an event you have organised
- to encourage people to support you
- to share with people what you have or are about to achieve

### *Contacting the media*

Find out which are the student and local newspapers and radio stations that cover the UCL area. Before you speak to an editor, producer or journalist it is important to be prepared. You may want to send a press release first and follow this up with a phone call. Check who is the right person to contact at the newspaper. Call up and ask who to send your press release to and find out when their deadlines are.

### *Radio*

Appearing on the student radio station has similar advantages to gaining coverage in the press. Listen to the radio station to get a feel for the sort of stories they cover. Decide who your story might be of interest to and then contact someone at the radio office.

When appearing on the radio, go equipped with a short list of key points you want to make in your interview. Practice what you are going to say beforehand and this will make you more relaxed during the interview.

### **Writing a press release**

When you start to write a press release it can help to write down a list of everything you want to say.

Remember to include the following:

- What is happening?
- Why is it happening?
- When is it happening?
- Where is it happening?
- Who is involved?

Put the most important information in the first two paragraphs, with more detail and background information coming later in the text.

Always keep any press release short and to the point. Journalists will receive many press releases and won't read through long texts.

### **Keeping the momentum going in your campaign**

Many campaigns start with the best of intentions but as time goes by, you might find that enthusiasm begins to dwindle. If people have specific roles to fulfil, they are more likely to remain involved. Tasks people could do include looking after the group's finances, chairing meetings or producing a newsletter (this could have the added advantage of keeping others informed about your campaigning activities).

Another way of ensuring continued interest is to keep everyone informed of developments within the campaign, for example by setting up a social media account dedicated to the campaign.