

# ORGANIZING CONVERSATIONS

PERSON-TO-PERSON OUTREACH TO BUILD YOUR CHAPTER

# AGENDA

- What is an Organizing Conversation?
- The Seven Step Model
- Responding to Organizing
- Roleplay Scenario

# ORGANIZING CONVERSATIONS

THE WHAT & WHY



# WHAT IS AN ORGANIZING CONVERSATION?

- The most effective way to recruit, or move, an individual is to **talk to them face to face**.
- An organizing conversation is a **personal interaction** in which you **build a relationship** with a faculty colleague.
- You **get to know their problems**, and then **inspire them to action** to fix those problems through your chapter.
- This is how we **build relationships** and turn them into **collective power**.

# WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM A CHAT?

- Key to any organizing conversation is “**the Ask**”
- The “Ask” is simply **some action** we want our colleague to take:
  - Signing a petition, joining AAUP, filling out a survey, coming to a meeting, writing an op-ed, calling their legislator, attend a rally, join the organizing committee, etc.
- There **is a model** for such conversations that is tried and true.

# 5 BAD REASONS TO \*NOT\* DO 1:1S

1. We have so much work to do already, adding this is too much.
  2. We're just not good at it—faculty are introverted.
  3. We don't know anything about this department / department is very anti-AAUP.
  4. We don't have any members in department who can talk to them.
  5. We send emails and newsletters already.
- 1:1s are how you **recruit activists** to share the load.
  - That's why we need to **PRACTICE**.
  - We need to **confirm the bias**, most faculty aren't members because they were **NEVER ASKED**.
  - That's the point—we want to **better know our colleagues**.
  - Emails and newsletters are **one-way**.

# 10 GOOD REASONS TO DO 1:1S

1. You have **low membership density** (and you want more members).
2. You have **high membership density** (and want to put your members to good use).
3. You are in the **middle of a campaign** (and want to update members on your progress).
4. You are **between campaigns** (and want members to pay attention to important issues, hear their concerns, and discuss issues for the next one).
5. You **don't have** many activists (and you want to recruit them).
6. You have **lots of activists** (and you want to put them to good use and make them visible).
7. You are **having an event**/meeting (and want to turn out members).
8. You **want to have an event**/meeting (and need buy-in from members to do it).
9. You want to know what **your members are thinking** (and their concerns).
10. You want members to know **what the chapter is thinking** (and why everyone needs their help to be successful).

# THE SEVEN-STEP ORGANIZING CONVERSATION

A MODEL TO GUIDE YOUR OUTREACH





# A BASIC ORGANIZING CONVERSATION

- 1. Introduction** (Who are you and why are you here?)
- 2. Issues Discovery** (What problem(s) do they face?)
- 3. Agitation** (Who is to blame for that problem?)
- 4. Vision/Hope** (What can be done to fix it?)
- 5. The ASK** (Will you take a specific action to fix it?)
- 6. Inoculation** (This is what the administration will say.)
- 7. Follow Up/Plan** (Do we need to talk again?)

# INTRODUCTION

Introduce yourself. Say who you are, and why you want to speak with them.

Do you have a few minutes to talk with me about the budget cuts?

I wanted to make sure I spoke with you about a survey on faculty issues.

I'm here to talk about what your AAUP chapter is doing, do you have a minute to talk?

I'm trying to speak with everyone in this department about the Board's latest policy.

# ISSUES DISCOVERY

This is the **time to LISTEN!** Ask open-ended questions to find out what this faculty member cares about and to identify the problems they face. **Important to spend most of your time here.**

Tell me about your teaching assignment this term. What are some challenges you're facing?

How does the administration's reopening plan effect you and your family?

If you could change three things about being a faculty member at [X] university, what would they be?

What do you think of the administration's 'realignment plan'?

# AGITATION

Once you've uncovered important issues, it's time to **explore them through agitation**. Agitation allows the person to **express their frustration** and **identify a culprit**.

What kind of an impact do you think these cuts will have on students?

Why do you think faculty aren't playing a real role in the process?

How do you think the college got into this financial trouble?

Why don't you think the administration has done anything to resolve [x problem]?

# VISION (HOPE!)

Through **questions and brainstorming**, you help them realize **what must be done** to fix the problems they identified, while giving them information about why **COLLECTIVE ACTION** (your ask) is the answer.

How do you think other faculty feel about this?

What do you think it would take to get the administration to change course on this policy?

What if we worked with students to bring this to the attention of the administration?

What kind of message would it send if faculty were publicly united against this?

# THE ASK

Perhaps the most important part of an organizing conversation: Ask your colleague to **commit** to an action. **ALWAYS HAVE AN ASK!**

The first step toward solving [x problem] is to determine how widespread it is. Can you fill out this survey?

I noticed you have a new colleague—could you share this petition with them?

We agree that this problem isn't going to fix itself. Will you join your AAUP chapter and stand with your colleagues against this?

We need your input in our campaign, will you attend our Organizing Committee meeting next week?

# INOCULATION

It may seem counterintuitive, but it's important to **inoculate** the organizee with weak arguments against your position, or against taking action. That will bolster their “immune system” against stronger attacks from the administration.

How do you think the President will respond if she hears about our survey?

What do you think we can do if the administration starts threatening people over this petition?

Why do people join the AAUP when they don't have to?

How would your [insert academic authority figure here] react if they saw you at the rally?

# FOLLOW UP/PLAN

.Then, review what they agreed to do and **make a plan for follow-up**.

I'll reach out to you tomorrow and see if you have any questions about the survey

I'll see you next week to see how your conversation with your colleague went

What would you need to know to join your chapter?  
I'll get you that info.

Remember that our organizing meeting is next week Tuesday. I'll send you a reminder over the weekend



# RESPONDING TO OBJECTIONS

HELPING YOUR COLLEAGUES UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR ACTION



# RESPONDING TO OBJECTIONS

- Objections to joining the AAUP are **exceedingly common**, but they do not necessarily indicate that someone is not willing to join or take an action.
- People may have limitless objections. **It is your job as the organizer to determine if that person's objections are sincere** (and are willing to be changed), or not.

# FEEL, FELT, FOUND

Deal with objections using **feel, felt, found**.

- I understand how you **feel**.
- I've **felt** that way before [or I've felt a different way].
- What I've **found** is . . . [joining the chapter or taking an action as a solution to said issue does X].

## EXAMPLE OF FFF

**Example:** If we just keep our heads down, maybe things will get better. I don't want to make waves.

- You're right, I also **feel** that the administration intimidates assertive faculty.
- I've often **felt** that I should just stay in my office and focus on my work for fear of retaliation.
- What I've **found** is that I felt I had agency and a voice when I started being active. There's **strength and safety in numbers**. Joining the chapter means that we can **speak collectively** about the issues that affect us without any one of us being singled out. This is the way to **start being part of the solution**.

# AFFIRM, ANSWER, REDIRECT (AAR)

Deal with objections using **affirm, answer, redirect**

**Affirm:** You make an expression that shows understanding or empathy with the objection

**Answer:** You give a factual answer that doesn't skirt the issue

**Redirect:** You refocus the conversation on the issues they already discussed

## EXAMPLE OF AAR

**Example:** The dues are too much.

**Affirm:** I understand that [\$]\$ a month on dues can be a lot.

**Answer:** Dues help support our organizing efforts, strengthen and grow our chapter, and create a better workplace for faculty.

**Redirect:** We are currently working to push back against these top-down austerity measures that are affecting faculty and pushing our budgets to the brink. What do you think we could do pushback?

# REVIEWING THE CONVERSATION

DETERMINING YOUR COLLEAGUE'S COMMITMENT



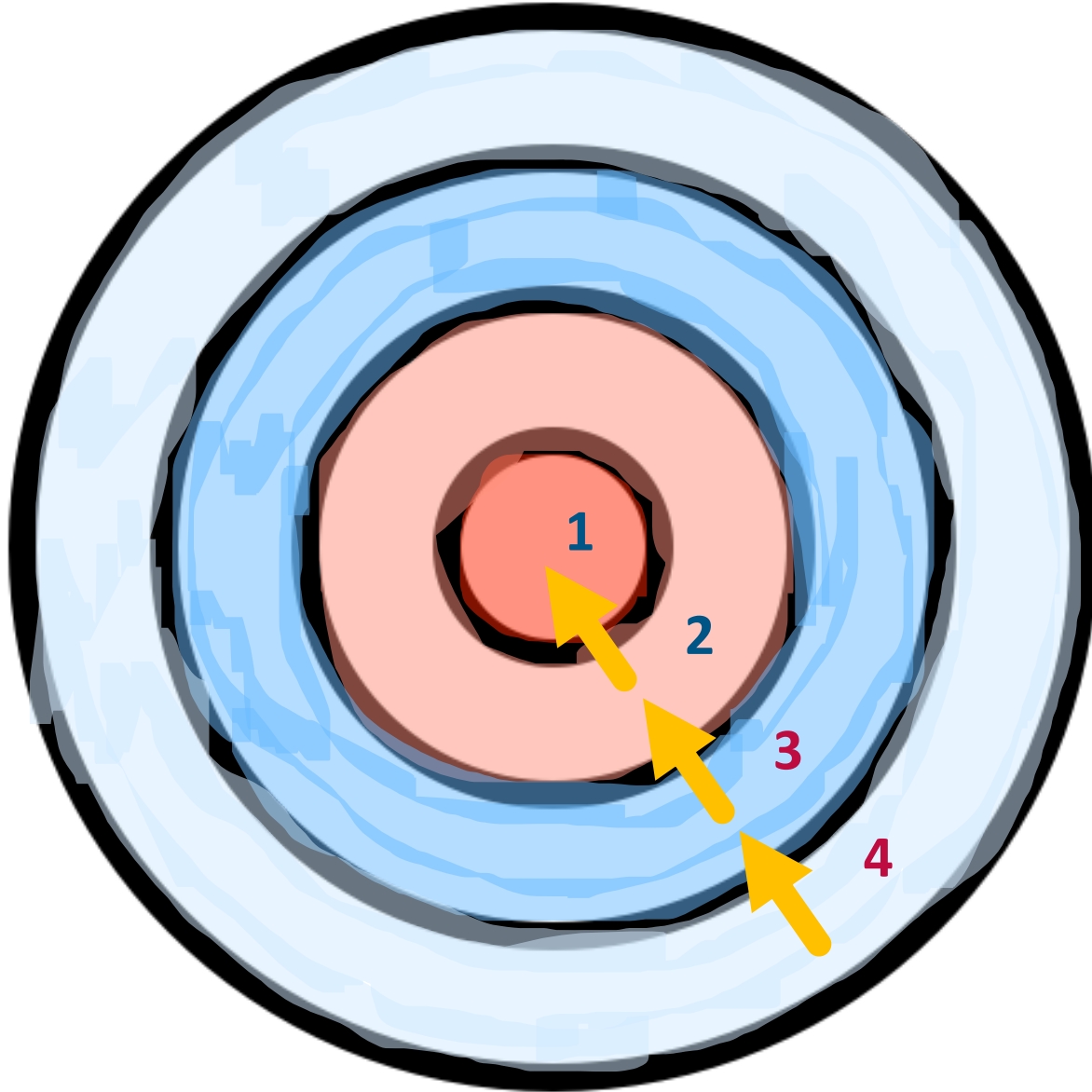
# REVIEW

Reviews are a **judgment call** that you, the organizer, make after having a conversation. Ask yourself this question:

*“Based on what your colleague said, what is their support for the chapter or action?”*



## Growing Your Chapter



One-on-one conversations are the **critical piece** that moves your colleagues each ring of the circle.

Leaders, activists, members, and nonmembers can each be **given a number** that we use to manage our outreach program

# REVIEW SCORE SCALE

<b>0</b>	Unreviewed	→ We haven't spoken with them yet.
<b>1</b>	Active, Supportive	→ <b>Said "yes"</b> to the ask and is ready to take further action ( <b>recruit them!</b> )
<b>2</b>	Clear Supportive	→ <b>Said "yes"</b> to the ask and supports their chapter.
<b>3</b>	Undecided	→ <b>Said "no"</b> to the ask or wouldn't give a clear answer. Possible to move to a 2 with more conversations.
<b>4</b>	Opposed	→ <b>Said "no"</b> to the Ask and does not support chapter. Very unlikely to change mind.

# ORGANIZING CONVERSATION

## EXERCISE

3 people in each: Organizer, Organizee, and Observer

