

# Proposal Writing & Campaigning

## Proposal Writing

- ❑ **No** requirements for formal language
- ❑ **All members** with voting rights can make proposals – send to Arbiters or CC
- ❑ **Actions vs. Reasons:** Separate the exact actions you are proposing from the reasons for the proposal (*optional*)
- ❑ **Goals:** How does it advance the group?
- ❑ **Details:** Get more and more specific.
- ❑ **Money:** How much cost, how do we pay? Will it require budget/make \$\$?
- ❑ **People:** Who is responsible for carrying out the proposal? Who addresses the situation if it isn't implemented? How many people do you need?
- ❑ Get your proposal out **early** if possible so people have more time to consider it
- ❑ **Brevity** – keep it short – you write less but more people actually read it
- ❑ **Overwhelmed? Ask anyone for help!**

## Building Support

- ❑ **Start with contacting people you know, or people you know support the idea**
- ❑ **Involve multiple people in writing & conceiving. Get co-signers as support, or co-authors in a writing dialogue. Listen, adjust, compromise.**
- ❑ **Tour every branch's meetings & other functions, introducing and advancing your proposal – campaign for your idea how you'd campaign for anything else, talk to individuals during small talk**
- ❑ **Have a two-sentence summary for pitching to people ("elevator speech"), figure out the main point/change: **what does it do/who does it?****
- ❑ **Throw a proposal introduction meeting**
- ❑ **Don't get hung on individuals who disagree, there's 50 more to reach. Don't burn yourself on long debates. Let the convo drop, let them have the last word, walk, move on to others.**
- ❑ **request a membership roster & call people re: your proposal**
- ❑ **CC support is nice but isn't everything – talk to members primarily**
- ❑ **Be credible; do organization's work**
- ❑ **Create a team of supporters who help advance, advocate, & campaign**
- ❑ **Overwhelmed? Ask anyone for help!**

## Network Dynamics

Don't start with listservs, emails blasts, or FB announcements. Get to them later. Social network theory says power is built from human networks which consist of one-on-one connections, not blanket announcements

- ❑ Proposal campaigning may seem obsessive, but your ideas matter, & passion + good organizing = success
- ❑ Leaders already have strong positions in the social network and don't need to campaign; the rest of us do.
- ❑ Cold spaces (listservs) reinforce existing dynamics; 1-on-1 campaigning can radically transform power & networks
- ❑ Congress is the END of the dialogue; participate the whole time leading up. Find the dialogue & host it yourself.

## Anticipating Opposition

Expect argument. Address some of the usual, familiar counterarguments in your initial case

## Listen to Opponents (and supporter criticisms)

Treat your proposal as an evolving document, update your "reasons" section with response to their arguments, integrate good suggestions

## At some point, Ignore your opponents

Put your idea out & walk. If there's opposition, give basic defense, but no further. Back-and-forths distract from your idea & chase off readers. Give detractors the last word, let it drop. Drop a stone into the water & let the surface ripple, know your idea invisibly affects others even if countered. Channel anger into more campaigning, not web debates. Be Zen.

## Stick to your guns

If by listening to detractors you realize you were mistaken, that's fine. If you have a point, insist on it. Don't fret initial low support. Keep one-on-one campaigning & see what happens.

## Know your rights

All members can make proposals. If someone tells you to back down, they have no formal right to do anything but state their opinion & give suggestions. Go to the arbiters with any process/conflict problems. We are all fighting for our liberation, so the Left is the collective property of humanity. You always have a right to exercise democracy in socialist organizations.