

Media Strategy to Support Volunteer Effort

The *Tuition Relief Now!* campaign has developed a comprehensive student-focused media strategy which will aid our volunteer signature gathering effort (and will be deployed once we've qualified for the campaign to election day). This strategy includes outreach to campus media outlets, but focuses on an innovative new technology campaign to reach our target audience of students and young voters. While our print, radio and television media efforts will inform and educate voters, the new technology campaign will also serve as a center for campaign organizing and signature gathering.

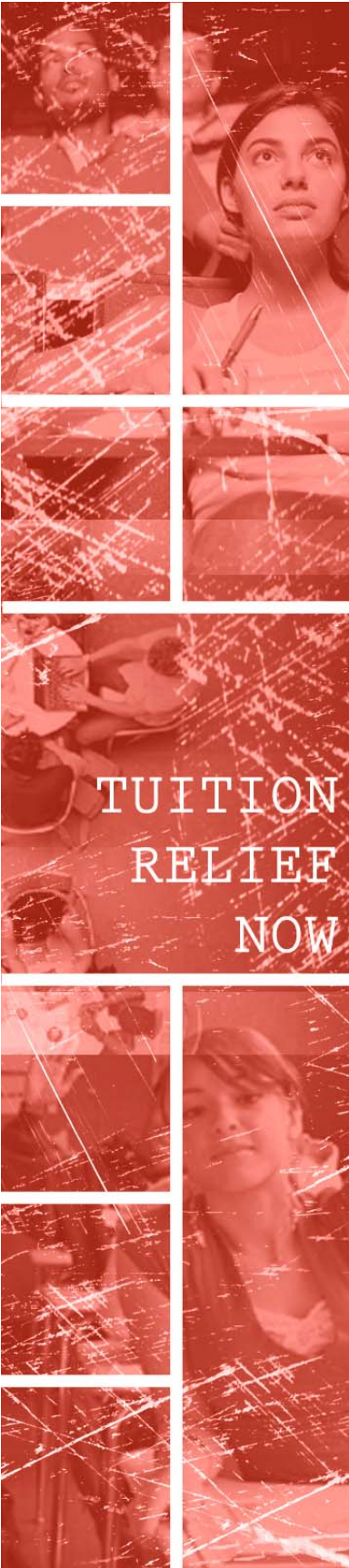
New Technology

Official Campaign Website

A major advantage of this student-led campaign is students' extensive awareness of and interaction with new technology. This initiative campaign could potentially be the first ever to use the Internet to help propel a volunteer signature gathering drive. In order to tap this potential, we have contracted with Plus Three, a major political website developer based in Washington, DC, to build the first-ever interactive California ballot measure website.

The mission of the campaign website is twofold: 1) to serve as a central hub to organize our army of signature gatherers and give them a way to connect to others, share ideas, and do grassroots fundraising; and 2) to give the general public a way to learn about the campaign, print out an official petition form to sign and mail back, and get involved.

We envision this website facilitating what could become the "Wikipedia of California initiative campaigns" ... in other words, a ground-up effort where the knowledge shared is contributed by ordinary folks. While limiting in some ways, having a small campaign budget is also our blessing. Without a lot of money to hire the "experts", we have to depend on our own





creativity and wisdom. The website will provide an organizing and fundraising hub, and most importantly, will serve as a place for student organizers to share all of their signature gathering ideas that could help us qualify in historic fashion.

Volunteer Blog and “Big Idea Center”

The *Tuition Relief Now!* blog provides a space for campaign organizers across the state to share their personal stories about college costs. The blog features the “Big Idea Center”, a space for volunteers to share ideas for signature gathering and grassroots fundraising with other volunteers around the state. This feature taps into the creative thinking of all student volunteers and creates a sense of movement.

Social Networking Websites

The *Tuition Relief Now!* campaign has already started active groups in Facebook and MySpace as virtual networking and organizing tools. Members number in the hundreds and continue to grow daily. We’re also posting videos on You Tube that provide background on the issue, show our work and highlight our progress. Because our campaign is run by students, we know how students communicate and become involved with issues they care about. This campaign could serve an historic role in engaging young voters by incorporating new and innovative organization and communication strategies.

Viral Internet Ads to Aid Volunteer Effort: “Help Mikey” Ad Campaign

We have high-quality, in-house TV production capacity. This campaign has produced a series of seven 30-second TV/internet spots to promote the volunteer signature gathering effort. Ads will be broadcast online for both cost effectiveness and to create a viral effect. A new ad will be unveiled every several weeks during the signature effort to generate excitement.





The series of ads will follow the efforts of one main character, “Mikey”, a very cute 9 year old kid. Each 30-second spot tells a story of Mikey doing something hilarious to raise money. The end of each ad will feature the same message: “Help Mikey. Make college affordable.” Viewers will then be directed to our campaign website, where they can sign up to volunteer and connect with other volunteers on their campuses or in their region.

Campus Media

We are engaging every campus media outlet in not only our communications effort but also our organizing strategy. We have built a press database of every campus paper and college radio stations. Upon filing, we will begin to host weekly state-wide conference calls with editors of campus newspapers. Our extensive relationship-building with campus newspapers will aid the organizing effort by generating significant free local press that creates a source of movement and encourages more students to volunteer. We will also run paid advertisements in campus papers.

Major campaign milestones such as the filing of the initiative, the delivery of signatures and the qualifying announcement will be publicized through press conferences and earned media events. In addition, a weekly fax blast will be sent out to identified media contacts throughout the campaign to update them on campaign progress. Campaign staff have begun to cultivate relationships with higher education reporters in major statewide and national publications and are planning meetings with the editorial boards of key California newspapers.

