USE YOUR VOICE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

Outreach and networking on college campuses

Purpose:

To build strong, sustainable, networks of students across all types of campuses (community and technical colleges, 4-year public and private universities) by engaging them where they are, connecting them to advocacy opportunities, and fostering peer-to-peer leadership. The goal is to reach students who might not otherwise step into advocacy, and to create inclusive, diverse networks across campuses.

Core Principles:

Accessibility: Meet students where they are (literally and figuratively).
Inclusion: Invite students from all backgrounds, programs, and identities.
Consistency: Build trust through a sustained presence, not just one-time events.
Visibility: Make advocacy opportunities easy to find and approachable.
Empowerment: Students should feel ownership of their participation.

Basic Flow:

Map the campus

- Identify key locations: student centers, dining halls, classrooms, clubs, and digital spaces where students gather.
- Learn who the gatekeepers are (student government, club advisors, DEI offices, etc.) who can connect you to more students.

Make contact

- Introduce yourself and your purpose clearly.
- Reach out to student organizations, professors, and administrators who already have trust with students.
- Attend existing campus events as a guest and network naturally.

Set up your presence

- Table at student fairs or in high-traffic areas with clear materials and a friendly, approachable vibe.
- Use social media and digital boards to reach students who don't engage in person.

Follow up

- Collect emails or contact info and follow through quickly with more information, invites, and ways to get involved.
- Keep showing up; visibility over time builds credibility.

USE YOUR VOICE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

Pro Tips:

- Have a few enthusiastic students on hand as student liaisons and regional coordinators, peers talking to peers is more powerful than staff alone.
- Offer something small but appealing at events (snacks, stickers, pens) through games they can win at to attract students.
- Be patient. Students are busy and distracted; repeated, friendly outreach works better than one big push.

You will need:

- Email scripts to introduce yourself to campus groups or administrators.
- Flyers/posters announcing advocacy opportunities.
- Checklist for tabling materials and setup.
    - Provide swag items as incentives for students to understand the "why" behind the program or storytelling
    - Provide printed information to give to students
    - Have a sign-up sheet for students to get on a mailing list
    - Some locations will provide tables, others will not. Bring your own tablecloth.
- Icebreaker activities to begin group meetings where people don't know each other.
- Links to campus directories or maps for planning outreach
- Videos showing them what the work looks like

Source: The WA-SEN Guidebook, available from wa-sen.org