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**Introduction:**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

― Margaret Mead

**Introduction to the Handbook:**

Activism has been at the forefront of American history since our country’s inception. Generation after generation of Americans have marched, fought, voted, and protested to make our country equal and fair. Activist movements, such as the Women’s Suffrage Movement in the 1920s, the Civil Rights Movement throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and the Occupy Movements beginning in 2011, have dramatically shaped the social, political and economic balances of the country. What these movements, social organizations, and campaigns have in common is activists’ undeniable dedication and enthusiasm to push these movements forward and create substantial change. Studying the history of activism and social movements allows us the opportunity to expand the common knowledge of tactics and techniques used in successful movements, to create a better tomorrow.

One day, you may wake up to find a pressing issue in your own community that you can no longer simply ignore. Yet when that moment comes, you may find yourself lacking the necessary tools and knowledge to respond and take action. There is no issue too small or unimportant, and when one takes a stand and becomes involved, with the proper tools that community’s potential is unmatched.  Instead of remaining passive, individuals must empower their community to unite, demand justice and take action against repression and wrongdoings. The goal of this handbook is to allow for individuals to break the habit of remaining passive and begin a journey of becoming an active citizen and further beyond to becoming a lifelong activist.

The following Student Activist Handbook provides a scrupulous look into the necessary steps of becoming an activist, starting an activist organization, and creating change in one’s own community.  We believe that anyone can be an activist and achieve societal change with the proper guidance.  The following **(8)** chapters will provide guidance for student activism such as different activist strategies, theories and tactics, how to create an active campus, maintaining momentum of a movement, campus recruitment, how to interact with university administration, and more. Our handbook aims to assist you and your movement develop a thorough understanding of your (1) diagnosis, (2) prognosis, and (3) the means, to develop a successful movement.

Following this introduction, the rest of this chapter will provide an overview as to some theory and strategy of social movements, as well as a look into organizational structures. In Chapter 2 we offer our insight into what activism is, and why engaging in activism is important, as well as how to manage your time when getting involved in a social movement. Chapter 3 focuses on different types of tactics use in social movements by activist organizations including pieces on internet activism, obtaining physical spaces for activism, as well as pitfalls to avoid and tactics which have proven to fail in practice. Chapter 4 provides advice on maintaining momentum and avoiding burnout in activism, as well as insight on how student activism changes over the lifecycle of a student. In addition, chapter 4 offers advice on how to transition from both school year activism to summer activism and vice versa, as well as offers strategies on how to recruit on college campuses. In chapter 5, we focus how to evaluate the success of a social movement and the impact that social movements have on communities. Chapter 6 looks at social movement’s engagement with the “outside” such as media, marketing and fundraising, as well as a look into whether movements are even effective in changing minds. Chapter 7 provides more specific research on campus activism and coalition building, and finally chapter 8 looks at student-athlete activism and the use of the student-athlete platforms to push for equality and social change.

This handbook is a product of the collective efforts of University of Michigan Political Science

students under the supervision of Dr. Christian Davenport. Together, we have created a cohesive guide based on an abundance of teachings, articles, and discussions to produce a thorough and functional guide to activism.

**Our Goal:**

The goal of this handbook is to provide individuals from all backgrounds the necessary tools to unite and stand up for justice, equity and fairness. This handbook aims to cover an abundance of tactics and strategies to promote productive and successful change. We sincerely believe that all individuals are capable of taking part in social movements and activism and our goal is to provide adequate tools, methods and strategies to do so.

**What Activism Can and Can Not Do:**

We would be naïve to say that you can accomplish anything you want when you set your mind to it, and frankly it’s a cliché which will set you up for failure. Not all of the world’s problems can be solved through activism and protest. However, activism has played a major role in almost all major social and political changes in history. Activism was crucial in ending slavery in the US, challenging dictatorships, improving workers’ rights, protecting the environment, and securing many other rights we now take for granted. These changed did not happen overnight and most of those movements took many years to gain widespread support and progress. While you may not single-handedly change the course of history, with activism you are able to take steps towards change to promote a better future for yourself and your community and encourage further movements around you.

**Why This Guide is Important for ALL:**

Regardless of your age, race, gender, or background, this handbook *is* beneficial to you! Activism, in the most basic sense, means to **take action** to bring about political or social **change** that benefits the wellbeing of yourself and your community.  Above all, we hope this handbook is a reminder that impactful change is possible and that you can play a role in it.

Activism is not one-size-fits-all, what works for some people and movements will most certainly not work for all. Activism can be as obvious as attending a protest or march, or as mundane as voting, but regardless there are forms of activism that all individuals can participate in!

“The most common way that people give up power is by thinking they don’t have any”

-Alice Walker

**A Note about COVID-19:**

In these unprecedented times, it feels like our lives are at a standstill. Many communities have joined together in support of each other as the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed great inequalities within our country. The disproportionate impact that this crisis is having on different divisions of society has been amplified due to the pandemic. This has allowed for many of us to take a step back and reevaluate the nature of the country, and the issues which remain ingrained in our culture. Organizations are now given the time to reformulate and refocus their attention on central longstanding issues which have been amplified due to the pandemic (i.e., racism, climate change, surveillance).

During a time when large social gatherings were not always safe for all individuals, activists were challenged with finding creative, new, physically distanced forms of protest and organizing. Lockdowns and restrictions created barriers to many forms of mobilization, such as street protests. However, in these uncertain times we have seen new forms of organization. Activists have expanded their tactical repertoire and have found innovative ways to take action, without having the meet in mass gatherings. Virtual workspaces have proved increasingly useful, as well as the idea of online campaigns and digital organizing.  One thing is certain, that despite a global pandemic, activists continue to fight for equality and justice in our country.

**History of Student Activism in Ann Arbor:**

Activism in Ann Arbor is no new undertaking or idea. In fact, this small city has a bright and significant history of organization and movement which sparked during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s. Ann Arbor was oft remarked as a key center of radicalism alongside Berkley, Madison and Columbia. Ann Arbor was the site for John F. Kennedy’s speech on the steps of the Michigan Union which led to the Peace Corps, the starting place for one of the most influential activist groups of that time, the Students for a Democratic Society, and the home to prominent activist leaders and local students such as Tom Hayden, Dick Flacks, Paul Rotter, Rennie Davis, Todd Gitlin and Carl Oglesby.

Black Student Union Takeover:

* + On April 9, 1968, the Black Student Union took over the University of Michigan’s Administration Building. Students chained themselves inside for five hours in protest for increased funding for African American students and faculty.
  + The Center for Afroamerican and African Studies was established as an outcome in 1970.
* Black Action Movement (BAM)
  + Coalition of the Black Student Union, Black Law Students Association, Association of Black Social Work Students and black students from the Medical School and Department of Psychology
  + Organized a 12-day campus shutdown where over 300 professors cancelled classes and departments shut down.
  + U-M agreed with BAM to increase black enrollment faculty hires and 10% African American enrollment by 1973.
  + BAM II continued to push for increased Black Enrollment throughout the late 1970’s.
* Sit-in
  + 1987 sit-in where more than 250 U-M students blocked the Fleming Building to protest against racist events on campus and demand for higher enrollment of ethnic minorities.
  + The University agreed to put forth efforts to increase the enrollment of minorities and hiring of a more diverse group of faculties. The University fell short of their promise.

* The Michigan Mandate
  + "A bold, strategic effort to transform the University to enable it to more faithfully reflect the rich racial and ethnic diversity of American society among its students, faculty and staff."
  + The Mandate was successful in its goal to increase the number of faculty in under-represented minority groups, and doubled the number of minority faculty by 1996.
* Anti-War Movement
  + Became increasingly active towards the end of the 1960’s when fighting in Vietnam surged. University of Michigan Faculty held a teaching strike – after they were targeted by the media and threated by the school, the teachers settled by deciding that instead of teaching less they would teach more and held an all-night “teach-in” about the war in Vietnam.
    - Roughly 3,000 people attended the “teach-in” and sparked a movement across the country as dozens of campuses held their own “teach-in.”
  + Ann Arbor Women for Peace were wives of Anti-War University of Michigan faculty members who organized rallies, vigils, demonstrations, etc. in protest of the Vietnam War.
* Anti-Michigamua
  + In 2000, the Students of Color Coalition occupied the Michigamua office space in the Union for 27 days and protested the group's use of pseudo-Native American styles and names.

Ann Arbor has a radical past which produced both influential movements and institutions. As Paul Saginaw, founder of Zingerman’s Delicatessen said, “Ann Arbor was where everything was happening. It’s where the excitement was!”

**What is Ahead…**

If you’ve made it this far, there is a good chance that something you’ve read has inspired you and prompted you to take action. This handbook was designed to allow the reader two options moving forward, and which you choose is up to you and the goals you set in creating an efficacious movement. You may choose to read the handbook as it is chronologically arranged, or by jumping to where you deem most relevant to your movement. If you read this handbook while recognizing your own contributions to social movement history, we are confident that this work will prove beneficial and enlightening.

Any comments, suggestions or quarrels regarding information in this book may be directed to the following email and website.