



Manual for Community Colleges Developing Programs in Peace and Conflict Studies

How to Market your Peace, Justice and Conflict Management Studies Program

Abbie Jenks, Professor, Greenfield Community College

What is peace and justice studies anyway? What can I do with a degree in peace studies? Answers to these questions are essential in order to adequately “market” a peace and justice studies program, in whatever form. This is especially true in community colleges as the students who attend are interested in knowing how any course of study translates into real work and a career. Additionally, many hold negative images of who “peace people” are: “old hippies”, unrealistic, idealistic, and so forth. The first part of this chapter on marketing a Peace and Justice Studies Program is devoted to enumerating some thoughts on how to articulate responses to these questions for promotional purposes. Those who develop and teach peace are living testimonials to the work and its value.

What is the orientation of your particular program?

At Greenfield Community College in Western Massachusetts the program focuses on the teaching of active nonviolence to promote social change. Finding discrete language to describe what the program will offer to the student becomes the task and the challenge. Since other programs have different orientations, adapt your program to your own. For instance, if your college offers either a degree or a certificate program in Conflict Management/Studies/Resolution, develop a language that speaks to the usefulness of developing skills for managing conflict. At Greenfield Community College, the focus translates into “finding new ways of solving problems and conflict and how to develop a sense of civic engagement”. Recognize that people generally understand that conflict and conflict resolution skills are aspects of peacemaking. Not as many understand the connections to structural violence and injustice. Try to make it understandable and focus on the main points that are essential to what we are attempting to teach. Some of the main points may include the following:

- Structural violence means all forms of oppression and violations of human rights. Examples include poverty, poor education, racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Framing injustice as a form of violence is a critical piece.
- Humans are not biologically wired to resort to war ([www.culture-of-peace.info/brochure/pages 6-7](http://www.culture-of-peace.info/brochure/pages%206-7)).
- Nonviolent action is not passive.

- Personal transformation becomes part of the learning. We learn how to manage our own feelings towards others and learn new ways of responding that help to get our collective needs met.
- Creating community and working together satisfies many psychological needs such as self identity, increased self esteem, finding meaning in work, etc.
- An injustice to one is an injustice to all. Developing an understanding of how we are all interrelated is crucial. (Use systems/ecological perspective)
- The idea of social construction: that we (as a group of people) create social norms and if that is true, we have full control of what kind of world we live in/what norms do we want to create?
- Times have changed. The advent of new and more lethal and technological weaponry and changing methods of fighting create the opportunity for even greater civilian casualties and greater harm to the environment. Nuclear weapons harm us all.
- Adopt a trauma informed perspective. This is the understanding that many of us have experienced some kind of trauma with resulting symptoms: increased anger and rage, sense of distrust in the world, or adopting a deep fight or flight response. The concept of healing may be included in the learning.
- Peace and justice are intertwined: One cannot teach about peace without teaching about the injustices that fuel conflict.
- From an academic perspective, Peace and Justice Studies is interdisciplinary and value based.

Peace studies at its best encourages students to become responsible, caring citizens of the world. It develops global thinking, a respect for diversity and the rights of all forms of life. It enables students to recognize social injustice, its contributing factors, and the actions necessary to bring about justice. Peace education fosters personal growth that allows the student to respond to conflict (interpersonal, intrapersonal, local, regional, and global) in a nonviolent, constructive manner. Social justice studies focuses on the study of injustices of all types with a goal of understanding the contributing factors, the repercussions, and the possible solutions. Both orientations are intrinsically linked. Peace education is the soil that nurtures the seeds of justice. One cannot teach about peace without teaching about the root causes of conflict, including injustices, that fuel conflict.

Who is your target audience?

Who are you trying to reach in your marketing strategy? Is it students in local school systems? Is it faculty and staff of these schools? What community groups are important to target? Do you want to reach the parents of prospective students? Do the faculty and staff at your college need to understand more fully what your program is and what it means to engage in the study of peace, justice and conflict management? It is vital to know your audiences as you create the promotional tools that are needed.

Keep the message consistent, clear and understandable to the general public.

How to promote a program at a community college.

Community colleges are entities unto their own yet are an integrated part of each local community. The tasks of marketing your program can be divided into two interrelated spheres and then developed into ways of promoting and marketing your program at the school and in the wider community.

Examples of on campus marketing

First turn to key people at the college in order to gain their advice and expertise. This group of people may include:

- Administrators such as the Academic Dean, or Campus President that may be responsible for the approval of the certificate or program
- Faculty members (engage faculty from all disciplines within which the courses and electives will be taught).
- Curriculum committee members (engage those whose approval and support is necessary for the new curriculum to be approved).
- Marketing and web designers
- Business and Information Technology faculty for marketing advice and enlistment of students in web design and marketing courses to earn service learning credit
- Admissions counselors
- Advising Center

The secondary advantage in enlisting their aid is that it exposes people across campus to the program option and what it is designed to do. Make sure that your campus administrator and President is kept in the loop of communications as the program develops. At Greenfield Community College (GCC), the President remains fully supportive of the Peace and Justice Studies Liberal Arts option and thus helps protect it from economic downturns.

Creating marketing materials

After working with each of these areas, create documents and other promotional materials to use in many different venues and arenas. Some examples may include a:

- **Brochure** of the program, using photos of students engaged in social actions for a peace and justice potion, or in business settings working with others for a conflict management orientation. Use common

descriptions and wording for objectives. Try to keep such language uniform in all public and internal documents and publications (see the appendix for examples).

- **Form letters** to be sent to school personnel and students at local high schools, to introduce the program. Again, these include common language and speak to what a student gains from enrolling in this program (see the appendix for examples).
- **Website** which includes the same information from the brochure, course descriptions, photos of students, current and past editions of any newsletters the students or staff may have created (GCC has one called Peacemeal), flyers for course offerings, a DVD that was developed using student testimonials about their experiences with studying in the option. The website at GCC was developed with two students from a web design class in the Business division at the college.
(www.gcc.mass.edu/programs/psj).
- **Promotional DVD** of key faculty and staff. Use students to talk about how taking courses in the program has assisted them, and include descriptions of career options. GCC produced one and the background music was written by a GCC student who took the Introduction to Peace Studies class and wrote the music as a creative project as a component of the course. This video sample is on the website, distributed to the Admissions office and is located on the GCC YouTube (see appendix for an example from GCC)
- **Peace and Justice Club** on campus. The PSJ Club at GCC has been one of the best ways to get the GCC and wider community involved and the students are absolutely inspiring! Who better to talk about studying peace than the students! Below is a list of activities that the Club members did that touched the GCC community as well as the larger off campus community:
 - Develop a film series. GCC Peace and Justice Club students, in conjunction with a local peace center, Traprock Center for Peace and Justice, created a film series called Peace and Truth for Reel. The Club and the Center offers a 6 film series each semester which has had wide appeal in the community.
 - Begin a counter-recruitment campaign on campus to counter balance the military recruiters. Students staffed a table with information about alternatives to the military, shared questions to ask a recruiter and information about opting out of the Federally mandated requirement that the college release personal contact information to the military.
 - Work with music students from a songwriting class to celebrate a national or international event around peace such as the International Day of Peace or the U.S. Conflict Resolution Day. GCC produces an annual celebration of Gandhi's birthday entitled Be the Change.
 - Participate in various letter writing campaigns for organizations such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch.
 - Staff a table for the Club at various events to promote the clubs activities and obtain new members for the PSJ Club.

- Bring the Graduation Pledge Alliance to your campus . This is a national campaign to encourage graduating students to pledge to promote sustainable practices in their workplaces and in their lifestyles. (www.graduationpledgealliance.org)
- Hold regular peace vigils/celebrations at the Peace Pole outside on the campus.
- Campaign to inform students of their rights on various topics. GCC students campaigned to inform students of their right to deny access to personal contact information to outside groups such as the military.
- Cosponsor other outside peace activities.
- **Bulletin board.** Create one that advertises current local peace and justice activities and programs, advertise the PSJ program and course offerings, PSJ Club activities and other relevant information such as conflict management and mediation trainings in the community.
- Visit your Advising Center staff to discuss the advantages for students enrolling in the PSJ option or your certificate program. This is where it is crucial to understand how to talk about your program or degree. Invariably, they ask “well, what can a student do with a degree or certificate in peace or conflict management?” (see appendix for some examples).
- Continue to see ways to integrate the current peace or conflict management courses into other degree or certificate programs. For instance, at GCC the course on Conflict Resolution and Mediation is one of the elective requirements for students in the Human Service program. Business students are a suitable group for these courses as well as students in the Education and Criminal Justice programs. Speak with the heads of each of these departments so that they understand the applicability of the course content in what they are teaching.
- Offer to hold a workshop at a Professional Day. Include the students!!!!
- Consider sending out an introductory letter to prospective/newly enrolled students to their home addresses with an accompanying program brochure.
- Conduct follow up phone calls with interested students. Holyoke Community College in Holyoke, MA, keeps track of phone, email and written inquiries about each of their programs in order to do follow up phone calls by each department/division/program.
- Additional ideas for promoting your programs come from Portland Community College in Portland, OR, which uses several strategies to promote their program on Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) that was started in 1990:
 - Providing updated information available both online and in hardcopy in their college catalogue
 - Making a copy of the brochure available to all college counselors and provide multiple hard copies for distribution
 - Scheduling courses in peace and conflict at varied times, every term, on as many of their four campuses as possible
 - Cross listing core courses so they may be utilized for credit across disciplines
 - Displaying information about their program at college orientation and other selected events.

- Sponsoring weekly “free speech forums” in public locations on campus which involve speakers, films, and other artistic expressions involving controversial issues that receive little attention elsewhere. Michael Sonnleitner, faculty and PACS chair at PCC, developed this idea and states that it was successful in terms of making the PACS program known and helping people gain some impression of its relevance (see the appendix for recent events done over the lunch hour).

Examples of marketing in the community

The Pioneer Valley in Western Massachusetts, where Greenfield Community College (GCC) is located, has a vast, active and diverse community of peace activists. This is a strength that GCC has to draw from. The area hosts local branches of several national groups including American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Class Action!, the National Priorities Project as well as numerous grassroots groups that address a variety of issues including ending the current wars, immigration, Israeli/Palestinian conflict, genocide, nuclear issues, economic issues, environmental issues, etc. The Pioneer Valley hosts five four year colleges and three community colleges in the area. There are many local experts in international relations, cultural issues, etc. Greenfield and the surrounding area towns have many social service and nonprofit agencies to handle social issues. Realizing that not every area of the country has this advantage, it is important to underscore the fact that there is always some outside group that is vital to connect with. Consider churches, veterans groups, environmental groups, social service agencies, nonprofit agencies, and so forth that one can collaborate with. There are also media outlets that can be used for marketing the work. Here are some ideas:

- Distribute the program brochure to local libraries, cooperative markets, newsstands, churches, social service agencies, bookstores. GCC’s brochure has been sent to area school peer mediation programs, distributed during the Peacemaker Summit (an annual gathering of Massachusetts peer mediators), and made available at court houses, and adult literacy programs.
- Appear on radio talk programs to inform the public of the existence of your program. Be succinct in your method of articulating why it is important to study these topics and how it connects to the job market.
- Invite students to contact the radio or local cable TV stations to talk about what they are learning. Make sure the website is made available to the audience.
- Invite local peace activists, veterans, school or court based mediators, union negotiators, and other dispute resolution professionals into your classroom as a way to get to know and understand what each are doing. This is the best way to bring together the theory and practice of peace, justice and conflict management.
- Assign interview projects and papers; subjects may include peace activists, veterans, mediators, conflict management and alternative dispute resolution specialists in government, justice and education settings.

- Speak in churches. For example, offer thoughts on what positive personal transformation can occur while studying nonviolence, peace and the skills of conflict management as well as information about the program and what it offers.
- Place information about the program on other local websites. The GCC program is on the AFSC and Traprock Center for Peace and Justice Website, as are the activities GCC sponsors such as the Peace and Truth for Reel series.
- Advertise in local publications. GCC has promoted the PSJ program in environmental, alternative and mainstream papers.
- Invite the press to come to any and all activities that are held as part of the PSJ program or Club. Many of GCC's events appear in the local newspapers section on the college.
- Offer to speak to anyone at anytime! Rotary groups, Women's League of Voters, Veterans groups, church groups (some have their own Peace and Justice committees), Interfaith Councils, schools and local mediation centers.
- Carry copies of your card and brochure wherever you go.
- Engage people as you go about your other interests. Do you have a dog and meet people? Take a creative arts class? Yoga? Rock climbing? Book group? Discuss what you do and why you do it.

Student involvement: Involving the students is crucial as they are one of the most credible and strongest voice to describe what being involved in a Peace, Justice or Conflict Management Program can do and how it is of benefit to do so. At GCC, their involvement in the creation of the DVD and speaking on TV, radio and other venues has been critical to the promotion of the program. Some of the GCC students have done a social action project that specifically targeted visits to local high schools to promote the program. They contacted the principals and guidance counselors, made brightly colored T-shirts that said Ambassador for Peace to wear when they visited and put together a folder with the DVD, brochure and the letters to school personnel and students. They also visited several English classes on campus and talked about what they do and why. These strategies were very effective, gaining insight into the program and added several students to the program.

In classes, offer ways for students to do either a social action project or a creative project. Both have resulted in "tools" to help promote the program: a theme song, several plays that will be produced by GCC theater students, cross discipline activities and the student publication at GCC, Peacemeal (www.gcconline.org/peacemeal).

GCC's English composition classes are beginning to develop themes for their semester and peace will be one of them in the Spring, 2010.

Advisory Board

An Advisory Board of community and college people is always wise. At GCC there is a GCC Peace Education Center Advisory Committee. Its purpose is to help support the development of a Peace Education Center in conjunction with the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice for the development of teacher resources to teach

peace and justice education. This is another way to help introduce the PSJ program into the local schools as well as increase the ways and places where peace is taught. The Board members consist of faculty, staff, retirees of the school and local teachers and educators.

Consider the disciplines your students may choose to become involved in and invite individuals who can provide guidance from that perspective such as schools, community organizations, courts, government, local businesses. Include individuals who also represent organizations which may help you recruit students such as school counselors, representatives from youth serving organizations, and others. At Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio, the community advisory for the development of the certificate program in conflict management and peace studies (designed for students across disciplines), is made up of representatives from government, law enforcement, justice, education, non-governmental organizations, health and business representatives. The community advisory assisted in reviewing outcomes for the core courses and for the selection of electives.

Careers

Finding work is the question on everyone's mind, especially at community colleges. The first notion to address is that a two year degree in peace studies is viewed as a transfer option where students continue on to earn a Bachelor degree at a four year college. A certificate program in Conflict Management/Resolution can be a stand alone, skills based, supplementary process of learning as well as being integrated throughout the methods of teaching and the content integrating theory, skills, and application. There is inherent value in both an academic and skills based program for learning. One enriches the other. Experiential learning is an integrated way of teaching and learning that helps deepen the understanding of the theory. The distinction is important, to make, especially as we must articulate what will be the outcome for students enrolling in either type of program. Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland, Ohio gathered the information on many of the colleges and universities with programs across disciplines in Ohio to assist in considering transfer agreement sand worked with one of the four year universities to assist in the development of the core courses for ease of transfer.

One of the most frequently asked question is: What can I do with a degree in peace or conflict management ? Again, having some theoretical understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities taught assists in answering this essential question. The answer is that you can apply this knowledge and skills set to any discipline. For instance, one can develop mediation and alternative dispute resolution skills and work in a number of organizations and settings: courts, child welfare agencies, therapeutic settings, schools, justice organizations, law enforcement, health care, and work place/human resources. One can enter the field of Restorative Justice in education settings, juvenile or criminal justice systems or utilize the skills in community settings. The values, knowledge and skills that one learns can be used in business, nonprofit agencies, environmental organizations, education, law, social work, and others. As part of a liberal arts education, the world view offered by teaching peace and justice or conflict management can be adapted to what Psychologists for Social Responsibility call Careers for the Greater Good (www.Psysr.org). The Graduation Pledge Alliance's work also supports similar efforts of students to support the greater good. Founded in 1987, the Alliance promotes a commitment on the

part of students to “...take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job” (www.graduationpledge.org). Both organizations Websites have advice and resources for job hunting and career planning.

Integration of Environmental Issues

Environmental issues are receiving much deserved media attention now and can be utilized by our mission of promoting peace, justice and conflict management. Developing ways to incorporate human ecology, environmental issues, creating a sustainable future and the impact of our behavior in the world are important to articulate as there are a growing number of people who understand that our consumer needs are causing global degradation and that we need to change our behavior. Connecting peace, justice, conflict management and environmental issues are critical to this work, and a way for many to begin to understand the need to develop different ways to manage conflicts. It becomes a call to create community, to encourage grassroots involvement and to heal from our collective trauma and can be seen as a good marketing strategy.

Conclusion

Marketing peace, justice and conflict management studies programs is a collaborative and creative process. Administrators, staff and faculty all share the responsibility of promoting such programs. The value of engaging in the study of these topics is important to communicate to your selected audiences. It is important to know your program, what it can do to contribute to a better world, who your audience is, and what a person can do by studying these subjects.

Please visit the web site www.CREducation.org for additional chapters of the *Manual for Community Colleges Developing Programs in Peace and Conflict Studies*.