



CREATE
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL EQUITY,
ASSESSMENT, AND TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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Dear UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement,

The Valuing Open and Inclusive Conversation and Engagement (VOICE) Grant provided us with initial funds to pilot UC San Diego's adoption of "#USvsHate," a collective action project promoting open discourse and civic engagement. #USvsHate (usvshate.org and usvshate.ucsd.edu) is a public anti-hate messaging initiative that UC San Diego's Center for Research on Educational Equity, Assessment, and Teaching Excellence (CREATE) successfully piloted in San Diego K-12 schools and community colleges from 2017-2019. In 2019-2020, as the K12 project scaled nationally, UC San Diego became the first four-year institution of higher education to participate in the #USvsHate movement with support from the VOICE Grant. Now, our team's work to build universities' capacity to support #USvsHate at UC San Diego and beyond continues in 2021 and onward.

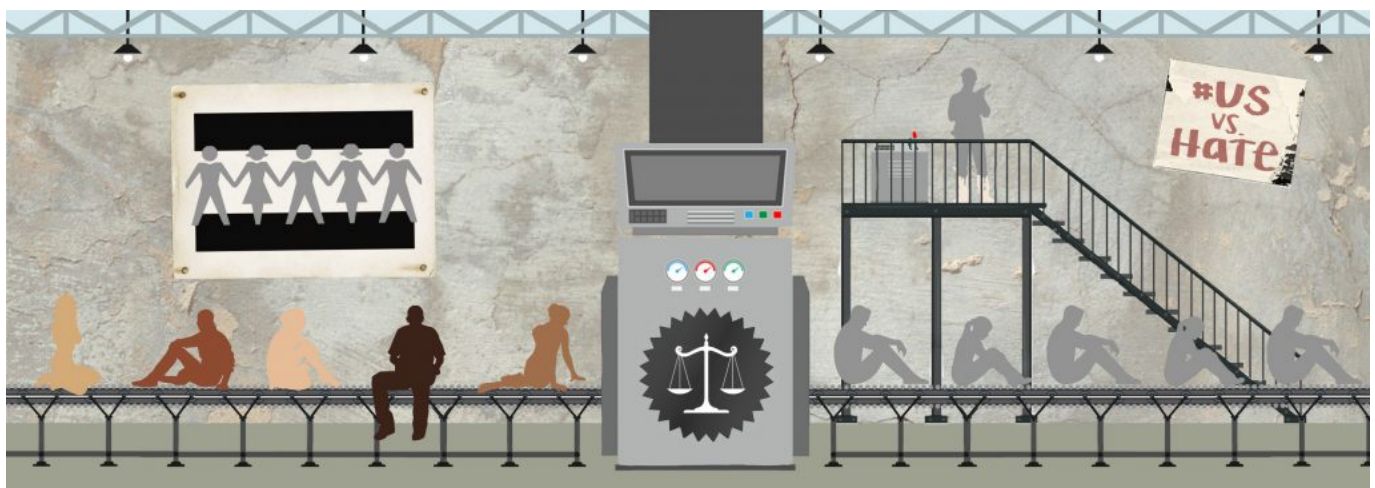
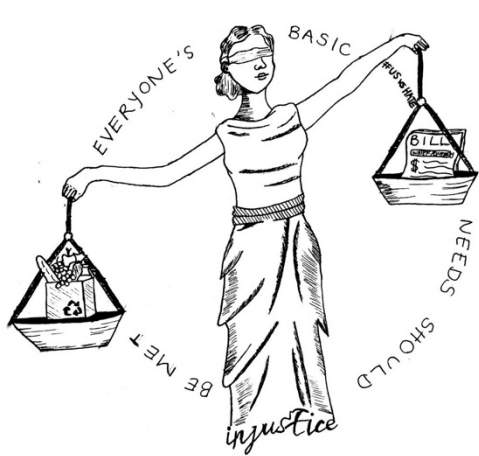
In #USvsHate, educators facilitate anti-hate lessons catalyzing classroom dialogue about issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice. Educators tap a free collection of resources from national partner organizations or build on their existing curriculum. Then, students create public anti-hate messages for their campus communities (in any media) that explicitly address, explore, and refuse racism, xenophobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, or other "hate forms." Students voluntarily submit their products to #USvsHate messaging contests, which we hosted quarterly at UC San Diego. Following a voting process involving students, staff, and faculty, selected winning anti-hate messages are amplified digitally on our website(s) and social media, and some physical products are reproduced as posters and stickers for public display in campus spaces.

Below is a summary of the objectives met by #USvsHate at UC San Diego with VOICE Grant support.

Collaborations Established: Alongside #USvsHate leadership at CREATE, our VOICE Grant partners included students, staff, and faculty of UC San Diego's Human Developmental Sciences Program (an undergraduate major/minor), the Cross-Cultural Center, the Triton CommUnity Initiatives, the Vice Chancellor's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and the Teaching + Learning Commons.

#USvsHate Higher Education Toolkit (usvshate.ucsd.edu): We collaboratively developed a free online Higher Education Toolkit for integrating #USvsHate dialogues, learning, and public pro-inclusion messages into our college classrooms and campus community centers. The Toolkit includes select #USvsHate lessons and resources supporting higher education faculty, staff, and student organizations to foster inclusive dialogue, building capacity for engaging in open discourse across and within campus constituencies. We built the toolkit through piloting the work, as we invited initial input and later feedback from faculty and staff well-positioned to spearhead their students' participation in the #USvsHate project. These representatives included instructors of certified "DEI" (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) courses and faculty participants in inclusive teaching workshops at our campus' Teaching + Learning Commons.

#USvsHate Student-Made Public Messaging: UC San Diego students were invited to create anti-hate messages to impact campus climate. Examples of winning pieces (usvshate.ucsd.edu/winners-exemplars/):



These #USvsHate messages and more were also uplifted on UC San Diego's social media channels:



Participants and Demographics: Five faculty members and three staff members who are campus leaders in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) efforts introduced #USvsHate in courses and student activities. These representatives engaged key departments including the Human Developmental Sciences Program, Education Studies Department, and Center for Student Involvement. Overall, during the VOICE Grant pilot of #USvsHate at UC San Diego, 485 undergraduate students engaged with the project through their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion coursework, representing a breadth of different major disciplines spanning STEM, Social Sciences, and Humanities. Across four quarterly #USvsHate anti-hate messaging contest cycles, a community voting process resulted in the selection of 16 finalists and 22 winners.

Challenges: The COVID-19 pandemic stymied our initial plans to reproduce winning #USvsHate messages as physical posters and stickers to be displayed in public spaces on campus. However, we are now beginning reproduction in preparation for UC San Diego's return to in-person learning and activities in fall 2021.

Impact: Beyond the student, staff, and faculty participation numbers, the impact of #USvsHate at UC San Diego was seen through students' testimonials about the meaning of the anti-hate messages they produced. By inviting students to share backstories about the learning and intentions behind their work, we saw how #USvsHate achieved an additional goal beyond the initial effort of spreading public messaging against hate and for inclusion and justice: Undergraduates made explicit connections between the theoretical content they learned in their coursework and the kinds of social justice transformation they hope to see in society.

For example, in describing the message above, "Health shouldn't have borders," the creator explained, "When conducting my research for my [class final exam] presentation, I realized that the majority of uninsured people are immigrants. For low-income individuals, insurance coverage is also difficult to obtain. My research was on reproductive health, and I found that the recent [presidential] administration reduced the funding to healthcare services that provide specialty care to those needing care for sexual health and family planning. I wanted to allude to the borders being built physically right now, while also acknowledging that there is a wall to healthcare being built at this moment. I decided to draw my representation of mother nature, placing her behind a border to represent the borders in place right now."

Future Support: In future years, we believe the VOICE Grant can support awardees by maintaining flexibility and guidance in line with recipients' expressed needs and concerns. During our pilot, #USvsHate at UC San Diego was made possible by the extended timeframe to complete the project (given conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which required a high degree of adaptation), and the opportunity to apply for additional funds via a second small grant. Further, we valued the collaborative nature of the VOICE program, and hope to see the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement encourage future VOICE Grant recipients to tap into opportunities for recipients to collaborate across their campuses.

Following our pilot of #USvsHate at UC San Diego, we aspire to continue supporting student engagement in anti-hate and pro-inclusion learning and public messaging that works towards social justice. The next phase of #USvsHate in higher education envisions future collaborations with additional four-year university campuses in our region and beyond, alongside our existing and new partners in community colleges. We also continue to grow this project nationally in K12 schools. See usvshate.org for K12 project progress and outcomes from our anti-hate and pro-inclusion work with educators and students across the country.

Sincerely,

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