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How to Communicate our Values in Political Advocacy: First Session of Resistance School Reaches Over 15,000

Cambridge, MA — In the inaugural session of Resistance School on Wednesday April 5, over 15,000 enthusiastic viewers representing individuals and groups across the country participated in a skills-based training program for activists. The viewers represented more than double the 6,000 that the organizers anticipated. They came together at universities, feminist book clubs, and local and county organizations for renowned historian and activist Timothy Patrick McCarthy's interactive session on values-based communication. The event, which started at 7 p.m. EST, attracted over one hundred people who came in person from the Greater Boston area to Harvard University's campus.

"We're living in a movement moment," McCarthy said. "America would be a far less decent and democratic place if not for the work of resisters and reformers—who have struggled to make real the nation's values of rights and democracy," he said.

Resistance School is a free four-session training program for activists to strengthen the skills they need to take collective action. It is founded by progressive graduate students at Harvard. This first session was designed to give participants tools to develop a compelling frame and narrative for initiating conversations about political advocacy.

"We need to do a better job of identifying and communicating our values," McCarthy said at Wednesday evening's event.

Resistance is not only about reacting against, said McCarthy, but also about creating and sustaining core values to build movements and give people something to be for. This requires naming non-negotiables, finding a frame, and sharing stories, he told a full audience, many intently taking notes. "Values are essential not only to resistance, but to social change," he said.

Over 6,500 registrants from 50 states and 20 countries, representing both individuals and groups ranging in size from a couple of friends to several hundred, enrolled in Resistance School since its website went live at 11 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28. More than double this number tuned in for Wednesday's livestreamed session.

Across the country, participants chimed in on social media, using Twitter and Facebook to join the conversation and connect with each other on some of McCarthy's central messages. On the subject of sharing stories, one Facebook user chimed in, "That's the key: understand each other, share identity with idea of reciprocity, think globally and act locally."

Those on campus lingered after the session to continue the conversation about core values. "As an educator, my whole job is to make people excited about learning. I saw that Resistance School is doing the same thing with thousands of progressive activists across the country, and this is critical," said Kathryn Short, a graduate student and Resistance School volunteer.

One participant from Chicago said on Twitter, "@Resist_School haven't spent 90 minutes listening and learning in a very long time."

New and returning activists will tune in on April 12 at 6:30 p.m. EST with former Obama grassroots movement architect Sara El-Amine. She will equip participants with skills to effectively persuade and strategically mobilize and organize their communities. Confirmed speakers for subsequent sessions are organizing strategist Marshall Ganz, and Democratic National Committee (DNC) Vice Chair Michael Blake.

About Resistance School

Resistance School is a free four-session training program for activists to strengthen the skills they need to take collective action. It is founded by progressive graduate students at Harvard, who wanted to find a way to contribute to the political activism springing up in communities across the country. The curriculum for Resistance School is designed for teams to join trainings, held on Harvard's campus and live-streamed online to communities across the country. Resistance School is collective at its core, and creates a space for people and communities to organize around values and issues that they care about in a way that is sustainable over the long term.

Who started Resistance School?

The team includes former staffers from the Obama, Sanders, and Clinton campaigns; community and labor organizers; advocates for human rights, campaign finance reform, and veterans' affairs; and journalists. Resistance School is a student-run initiative developed by students at Harvard University. It is not an official course or offering of Harvard University or any of its schools.

How to Participate in Resistance School

Resistance School is simultaneously streamed on the main page of the website (www.resistanceschool.com) and via Facebook Live (<https://www.facebook.com/ResistSchool/>) on the nights of each session. The Facebook Live and website versions remain available for unlimited playback after each session.

Resistance School Sessions

[Session One](#): Wednesday, April 5, at 7 p.m. EST: "How to Communicate our Values in Political Advocacy," featuring award-winning communications expert, activist, historian, and Harvard Professor Timothy Patrick McCarthy.

[Session Two](#): Wednesday, April 12, at 6:30 p.m. EST: "Mobilize and Organize our Communities," featuring former Obama grassroots movement architect Sara El-Amine.

[Session Three](#): Thursday, April 20, at 7 p.m. EST: "How to Structure and Build Capacity for Action," featuring longtime community organizer and Harvard Professor Marshall Ganz.

[Session Four](#): Thursday, April 27, at 7 p.m. EST: "How to Sustain the Resistance Long-Term," featuring NY Assemblyman and DNC Vice-Chair Michael Blake.

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For more information visit Resistance School on www.resistanceschool.com, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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