



PRINCETON PROGRESSIVES

Discussion Paper: 2021 and Beyond

I. Introduction

With several years of operations under its belt and the end of its first decade approaching, it seems appropriate for PPro to (1) examine whether it has met the various aspects of its mission, (2) revisit its mission, and (3) consider its role as it enters the second decade of its life and beyond.

The landscape for progressive Americans has changed significantly over recent years. Not only is “liberal” no longer a dismissive epithet, but people from a wide variety of backgrounds are more likely now to describe themselves as progressive or to adhere to progressive policies and values. Further, PPro’s creation coincides with an even greater desire among many for political leaders who will fight for and strive to implement progressive policies. Especially under the current administration in Washington, there is a hunger for a place where people can learn about a different way forward and discuss their views about the constant assault from the White House on notions of equity, equality, democracy, transparency, ethical behavior, rights for workers, the rule of law, and other core principles that PPro supports.

To assist the board in thinking about the next phase of our existence, we present this brief paper to facilitate discussion at an upcoming meeting.

II. A PPro Agenda for 2021 and Beyond

As the Board contemplates PPro’s role going forward and where we want to be at the ten-year anniversary of our birth, some matters to consider:

- Given that progressive policies and thinking have gained support in recent years, what role can PPRO appropriately play to enhance and further current progressive movements and candidates?
- Members of the Princeton community are desirable audiences for any candidate, author or other “thought influencers.” PPro might consider how to take advantage of this to serve its mission.

- Is there a significant role for PPro to play in supporting progressive candidates, spreading information about progressives policies and ideas, and influencing the political thinking of others beyond students and the University campus?
- How can PPro position itself to carry out all aspects of its mission, as described in its online materials?
- Given our mission, to what extent should our activities extend beyond the community of Princeton students and alumni and for which types of activities?
- PPro should not underestimate the extent of potential interest in, and support for, an expanded set of activities. How do we best market ourselves to take advantage of such interest?
- Other than support of students, what should our on-campus program look like going forward?
- Don't underestimate the power of word-of-mouth. We can play a role in building support for up and coming progressive politicians through small events with candidates or "pre-candidates."
- Many adhere to components of our core principles though they may not consider themselves "progressives" per se. Are we interested in helping such people to more fully understand the implications of our core values and expand their thinking?
- Should PPro develop local chapters that would have loose affiliation with a national board headquartered in this area? If so, how would this best be structured and rolled out?
- How do we build and maintain membership of PPro, including ensuring payment of annual dues to support our efforts?
- Given our mission, to what extent should we plan to have by the beginning of our second decade, any or all of the following as part of our stable of activities and what form should such activities take (more detailed descriptions are in Appendix C):
 - Direct action/civil disobedience
 - Marches & protests
 - Student activism
 - A place to talk/creation of a community
 - Lectures, talks, information
 - Training with experienced political organizers
 - Periodic PPro Salons with speakers
 - Partner with other organizations to co-sponsor events and activities (e.g.— and depending on the particular activity— the Latino, LGBT and Black Princeton alumni organizations)

- Electoral politics (to include campaign work, poll watching, etc.)
- Lobbying, including letter writing and other actions aimed specifically at elected & appointed officials
- Fundraising, to support all of the above

III. Next Steps

If the Board agrees that PPro needs to plan for 2021 and beyond, it has time to carefully consider what it wants its mission and direction to be by the tenth anniversary, and to develop and implement a plan for beginning to carry it out by that point. Ideally, there would be a full or at least a half-day Board retreat to allow time for flushing out ideas and reaching conclusions about the issues before us. The Board might consider appointing a sub-group of members that can meet regularly to develop a draft plan for consideration by the Board at such a retreat.

A Board “To Do” List might include any or all of the following:

- Revisit PPro mission and make any desired changes. Post same version of mission in all relevant places (e.g., our website, both Facebook pages, our PPro email communications—See Appendix A)
- Review and agree upon options for PPro activities, fundraisers and outreach in line with approved mission
- Determine role, if any, for non-Princetonians (including parents of students/alums):
 - as speakers at PPro events
 - as PPro members
 - as attendees at various types of events
 - as political candidates PPro supports
- Finalize plan for near, mid and long terms goals and activities.
- Determine budget and develop plan for raising funds.
- Determine other/additional technology or avenues needed for events, communication, social media and other PPro operations
- Develop plan for expanding mailing list and network:
 - Develop robust social media plan
 - Collect Princeton email contacts from all board members
 - Plan an email blast
 - Ask PANYC to include info in at least one distribution

- Co-sponsor event with PANYC
 - Include parents of students
 - “Friends of PPro”
 - Co-sponsor with other organizations
- Develop a list of venues available to PPro for events of varying types and sizes
- Develop a list of potential speakers for various types of PPro events – fundraisers, salons, free events, forums—with emphasis on those available to us as needed to flush out our annual program.

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We are excited about where the future can take PPro with all of us working together and look forward to discussing the contents of this paper with other board members at the earliest opportunity.

Jason Gold
Patricia Irvin
John Oakes

February 17, 2018

WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

I. From the Website

Our Values

We believe in a "big-tent" approach; while there is a range of opinion on many subjects among our members, we are united around a few core principles:

- Liberty and equality for all without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other source of discrimination, and the right of all people to marry;
- Measures to rectify the growing economic inequality that is undermining democracy in this country, including a rational and responsible federal income tax structure;
- Civil liberties and constitutional rights;
- Universal access to health care and the rights of women to make their own reproductive health care decisions;
- Access to quality public education;
- A sustained national effort to address the causes of global climate change, promote conservation and the development of clean and renewable sources of energy, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels;
- A foreign policy based upon multilateralism, international law, human rights, and respect for the variety of forms that democracy can take in different cultures;
- Common sense limits on the rights of citizens to bear arms;
- Freedom of association, the right of workers to collective bargaining, and elimination of discrimination in employment.
- A government that is neither "small" nor "big" but effective in performing those essential tasks not well served by individuals or private institutions.

". . . democratic government is one of the greatest institutional inventions of modern Western civilization. It allows us to pool our resources and to act collectively to address the serious social, economic, and environmental problems that we are unable to deal with as individuals. The public sector is also how we provide for essential human needs that are neglected by the

market – such as clean air and water, safe workplaces, and economic security. What’s more, government serves as an essential instrument of moral action – a way for us to rectify injustices, eliminate suffering, and care for each other. In short, democratic government is one of the main ways we work together to pursue the common good and make the world a better place."

Douglas J. Amy, Professor of Politics at Mount Holyoke College

What We Do

Because members of PPro share a commitment to activism in the service of progressive values, we connect like-minded members of the Princeton community to leverage our strengths and to ensure that progressive voices are heard, both on and off campus, by:

- Building a network of members who are involved in progressive organizations and causes.
- Supporting the activities of progressive student organizations on campus.
- Hosting events of interest to progressive Princetonians.
- Listing Princeton-affiliated candidates for public office and their positions/ratings on issues of concern to progressives.

PPro supports initiatives that are Princeton-related and reflect our values. We are a registered 501(c)4 organization, "operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare." The advantage of this status is that we are able, with the help of our members, to sponsor a certain amount of political activity, including student campaign trips on issues we care about. These trips cannot be funded by the University or other 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations.

II. From the Public Facebook Page

About This Group

PPro is a network of Princetonians who share a commitment to progressive values.

We connect like-minded members of the Princeton University community to leverage our strengths and ensure that progressive voices are heard, both on and off campus.

How?

Building a network of members who are involved in progressive organizations and causes. Members of PPro will be able to post and receive requests for information, volunteers, and support based on their interests and location, while maintaining their privacy.

Identifying organizations with strong Princeton affiliations (founder, board members, etc.) whose work furthers our values. Listing Princeton-affiliated candidates for public office and their positions/ratings on issues of concern to progressives.

Supporting progressive student organizations on campus.

Join us to help make a difference!

III. From Our Email Distributions

About PPro

Princeton Progressives (PPro) is a network of Princetonians--alumni, students, faculty, staff, and others--who share a commitment to progressive values. We connect like-minded members of the Princeton community to leverage our strengths and ensure that progressive voices are heard, both on and off campus.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

SALONS

There is value in just getting people together to discuss, explore and learn about progressive policies and ideas. PPro could host 2-4 salons per year with a speaker, charging enough to cover a simple dinner of salads, pizza, sandwiches, etc., plus a little extra for the coffers. Ask Princetonians to host at their offices or homes.

GET TO KNOW A PROGRESSIVE

Let it be known that we will host gatherings to introduce progressive politicians, authors and academicians to our network..

CAMPUS EVENTS FOR STUDENTS AND OTHERS IN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

This is already a major part of the PPro agenda. To what extent and in what direction do we want to grow the on-campus programs?

FUNDRAISERS

What types of events are most likely to raise funds for PPro? Do they necessarily have to be politically oriented?

POLITICAL FUNDRAISERS

To what extent, if at all, do we want to hold or participate in fundraisers for progressive politicians? How does this fit with the mission? Does it impact the tax status of the organization?

TRAINING

Training is the how-to side of lectures, talks, information. How to organize an action, how to handle arrest, how to protect your communications, lead/facilitate an event or action, etc.

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment would include raising awareness or organizing events around arts and cultural that have an overt or implicit progressive political message or otherwise shed light on progressive issues and goals (e.g., the annual Human Rights Film Festival). It could also include entertainment events for members, possibly as a fundraiser or simply for the sake of it.