

**Student for Stars | Final Presentation**  
**Summary of Campaign, Development, Challenges,**  
**Achievements, and Project Organization**

**1. How did you decide on your issue? How did it develop over time? (Lulu)**

After we presented multiple issue ideas to the class, the group reached a consensus to tackle the issue of light pollution because it seemed targeted enough, actionable, and exciting (ex: lots of ideas for events, tablings, and partnerships immediately came up). Our initial wave of research focused on making sure that light pollution was an issue on campus, once we realized it was we decided to lean into the issue, and used other campus's initiatives to reduce light pollution as a jumping off point for formulating our demands. Our initial issue focused on campus light pollution as a whole, and focused on how we could address it across campus.

We quickly realized this was way too big of an issue to tackle over time, especially without a map of existing light fixtures on campus to be able to begin to calculate the economic costs of implementing our demands. We continued to table at various events using our initial demands though, which eventually led us to a partnership with the astronomy department. This helped us identify a smaller scale issue: light pollution being caused by the corsair stadium lights that were impacting the usability of the brand new observatory. We switched gears to focus on 2 immediate demands: reducing light pollution caused by the stadium lights, and reinvesting any money saved from new energy efficiency into the implementation of new lights in underlit areas around the stadium. Our final demand, the implementation of a long term light pollution reduction plan into the 2040 campus plan, maintained the integrity of our initial demands by creating a way for the campus to address light pollution as a whole.

When we began this project, we knew we needed to narrow our focus, we just didn't know how much, and in what direction. What got us here was just being brazen in getting started, researching, and talking to people, until we ultimately found the sweet spot. Flexibility has been key to this entire process.

## **2. What challenges did you face? What wins did you achieve? (Olivia)**

Throughout our campaign, we faced various challenges and achieved multiple exciting wins. The challenges we dealt with largely revolved around departments and administrative channels on campus. One of our challenges was to find our target. When we initially researched, it seemed as though we found our target; however, by having conversations with staff on campus and learning new information, our target eventually shifted to be Dr. Sasha King, the Dean of Facilities. After sending her our email about the field, we learned that she didn't believe she was the right person for this. While we succeeded in having progress be made based on our demands, this means that we still were unable to accurately find and choose the best target for our campaign.

In addition, it was challenging to get in contact with departments and people on campus. Due to busy schedules, outdated emails, and more, hearing back from people was difficult. When trying to discover more to aid in our research, we hit roadblocks with either a lack of response or people telling us to contact other people to learn more. As we put it, it seemed as though we opened up Pandora's box and found issues on campus that most people did not know about. For instance, we discovered that there wasn't an official lighting plan for the entire campus, and no singular department had the lighting information for all buildings or walkways. There was no system in place to get information about each building's lights, such as their wattage or brand. There was no map of all lights on campus, or even information of how many lights there were. This led to difficulty forming all of our demands, gaining necessary knowledge, and delayed us getting into contact with our target. It also meant a lot more hands-on work, as we took pictures of lights, tried out mapping, and got in touch with more people.

We had many amazing successes that helped us connect with our community, gain momentum and support, and lead to exciting progress. Many of our wins came from our 5 tabling events. One of our most successful tablings was the opening of the MSB, Observatory, and Planetarium. At this tabling, we connected with stakeholders and community members, many of whom already had knowledge about light pollution and were passionate about our cause. This is also when we cemented our alliance with the observatory and Professor Balm, learning more about the negative impacts of the field lights on the new observatory's telescope. We reshaped our campaign to fit and work with this new angle, which was extremely beneficial. In addition, our tabling during Health and Wellness Week was one of our most successful in regard to connecting with our fellow students. We were able to inform our community about what light pollution is, the benefits of dark skies, and our demands. They were so supportive, wanting to both sign our petition and be part of future events. This led to the most petition signatures we received.

**3. How did you work as a team? What could be improved? What contributed to your success? (Isabella + Mahtaub)**

I think we were able to work well as a team because we were a relatively small group and all very much willing to put in the time and energy into making this project a success. Two things that contributed to our success were our diverse backgrounds and our desire to listen to each other's feedback and ideas.

Our diverse backgrounds (both in experience and skillset) allowed us to all take on roles and tasks that played to our strengths. For example, Erin used her creativity to create our amazing team shirts on a budget, Mahtaub brought her organizational experience to building out the project guide, Lulu used her art background to create beautiful materials for tabling, and Olivia brought the project together by staying on top of logistics for events and communication.

Since this was such a new experience for all of us, I think we very much took into account each other's ideas and feedback. Because we were learning together, we were able to grow together as well. Additionally, we always began our meetings with some small talk and hearing about each other's lives/weekends, which helped build camaraderie as we celebrated not only milestones in our campaign, but also in our lives.

We could have reached out to the decision maker sooner and changed our approach in doing so. I think we felt like we needed to have a lot in place before we made our initial contact with them - which definitely felt right in the moment - but looking back at it now - we could have initiated contact earlier and perhaps just introduced ourselves, our class and campaign and let them know we are in the process of getting more work/research/voices heard, tabling, etc. This would have functioned as an initial way to introduce ourselves and our work, and then let them know we would be reaching out again in a few weeks or a month once we were ready to present our work.

I think this would have been beneficial as a way to establish ourselves before other voices from campus chimed in and made their point before we could. Perhaps the initial introduction would give the decision maker a chance to hear from us in a more "friendly" setting before we then made our demands. It would also possibly help us know ahead of time if the decision maker we thought was correct actually was the right person or not. For example, at some point, multiple campus individuals said Sasha was the one to talk to, but in reality, she was not. Perhaps she could have told us that sooner, and it would have saved us time.

#### **4. What role did the project guide play in keeping your team organized? (Mahtaub)**

Creating the project guide for this campaign was definitely a fun process! It allowed me to channel both my creative and logical mind and provide the team with what I hope would be a mini database of all our work.

Throughout the campaign, the project guide took on different roles. At the beginning of the project, it provided an outline for how we could organize our work flow, time and establish responsibilities and tasks. Seeing tabs such as, Issue Development Checklist, Issue + Demands | Light Pollution on the Santa Monica College Campus, Identifying Incentives and Roadblocks, Research | Historical Analysis, Research | Target Analysis, Research | Power Mapping broke down responsibilities early on - as we were getting to know one another and our work styles. In the onset of the campaign the guide was a third space for us to take everything we read in our text, everything discussed in class, and everything we researched on our own and bring it together into one space for the team.

As the weeks progressed and we conducted research, accumulated data and new future milestones, the guide provided a central and collective space for the team to store, share, and review one another's work. Tabs such as, Schedule SMC Contacts for Building Power, Email Templates, Methods and Strategies of Social Action, Turning Methods/Strategies Into Campaign Activities and Actions, Materials and Additional Digital Tools helped our Zoom meetings stay on track and allowed us to view one another work remotely, creating an easy way to work as a team without always having to be in person. Given that we used so many additional digital tools such as Google Docs and Form, Canvas, Canva, Mural, and the SMC website - having a central space to track all our documents, links and creative designs was key.

As the project progressed and moved towards the end of the term, the guide naturally shifted into a complete overview and digital portfolio of our several month campaign. Coupled with our Google Drive that stored photos from our campaign, as well as Google documents - by the end of the term, we were already ready to submit our final project. The additional time spent at the beginning of the campaign to establish this project guide assisted in creating less work by the end of the semester. We hope future students find value in this type of guide, and we are more than happy as a team to project a clean copy for future student use.

### **Updates and Next Steps! (Olivia)**

Our other biggest win was the meeting of the stakeholders, which led to progress being made on our demands. The results of this included meeting with the Campus Safety Committee to see what changes can be approved, as well as experimenting with the stadium's light fixtures, all of which can be independently turned on and off, to see what works for the observatory, stadium, and campus safety.

We are hopeful that this will lead to the reduction of light pollution from the field, setting a new precedent on campus and leading to further change in the future.