Thinking About Class

Thinking critically about class and how it affects you and your GSA will help you become a better leader. There are many aspects of daily life where class privilege (or class disadvantage) can make a big difference – in major decisions, work and school, where you live, and social situations.

How to build an anti-classist GSA:

• **Take time to educate yourself on issues of class.** Learn about income equality. Find out about the distribution of wealth in the U.S. What do you know about consumerism and capitalism? Critically consume the media you’re given, and ask “How does class impact this?”

• **Dedicate a meeting to talking about the millions of dollars spent towards funding the fight for marriage equality.** Here in Wisconsin, advocates spent $6.2 million dollars fighting the ban on marriage equality. Why is marriage the most talked about queer issue of today? How does marriage equality help poor queer folks? Read *Against Equality: Queer Critiques of Gay Marriage, edited by Ryan Conrad.*

• **Explore the intersections between queer healthcare, race, ability, and class.**

• **Talk about the image of queer people in the media in relation to class.**

Consider the following scenarios that could happen and discuss them with your GSA:

**Scenario 1:** Avery’s GSA is deciding on their end of the year field trip. They are trying to decide where to go. Some options are a bowling alley, a sit-down restaurant, and the local park. The GSA has used up all of its funding for the year, so students will have to pay their own way. What should Avery’s GSA do? **How does class work in this situation? What’s the impact of each choice?**

**Scenario 2:** The GSA at East High is trying to decide when they should meet for the upcoming school year. Many students want to meet after school. Chen, a quiet freshman student, is afraid that if everyone chooses to meet after school they won’t be able to come because they have to babysit their siblings while their parents work. Bailey’s parents also work late, so the only way they can get home is by bus. RJ, another student, has to work every day after school in order to contribute to their family’s income. **How is class playing out in this situation? What’s the unintended impact of each time a GSA can choose to meet? What are other options for this GSA?**

**Scenario 3:** Everyone is sitting around laughing and chatting before Jaylin’s GSA meeting starts. Someone makes an offhand comment about a nearby trailer park, and people quickly begin telling jokes about “white trash”. Jaylin lives in the nearby trailer park. **How is class playing out in this situation? What’s the unintended impact? How would this situation be different if the word “ghetto” was used?**

**Scenario 4:** The GSA at West High School does an icebreaker before each meeting. The icebreaker question of the day is “If you were trapped on a desert island and could only bring one thing with you, what would it be?” Teagan immediately raises their hand and says that they couldn’t possibly live without their smartphone. Several other students agree, and list other game consoles and electronics that they’d bring with. Elliot is from a low-income family and doesn’t own any of those items. **How is class playing out in this situation? How might Elliot feel in this space? What’s the unintended impact of this icebreaker?**

*Created by Jess Draws*