



Define American College Chapters Official Toolkit



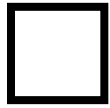
Clickable PDF!

links to free films and resources



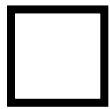
First Steps

Join online



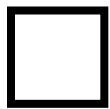
Visit defineamerican.com/chapters, and sign up to join the student leader network. Read and agree to the Define American Chapter Principles.

Reach out



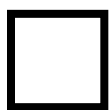
Contact Campus Engagement Manager Julián Gómez (@DACHapters) on twitter, and chapters@defineamerican.com.

Get official



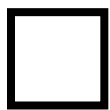
Register your Define American College Chapter as a recognized group on campus through your school's Office Of Student Affairs or Office Of Student Government.

Recruit



You must recruit five other people to be in the chapter besides yourself. The more people, the more influential your chapter will be and the more change you'll be able to make!

Start planning



Brainstorm ideas for hosting your own Define American event, or participating in an upcoming campaign.



Welcome

Define American is a media and culture organization using the power of stories to transcend politics and shift the conversation around immigrants, identity and citizenship in a changing America.

Our request is simple: Let's talk.

To start, the conversation is about immigration.

Our immigration system is broken, and fixing it requires a conversation that's bigger and more effective than the one that we've become accustomed to.

We hope you'll join us in asking new and better questions.

Define American is a 501c3 nonprofit, nonpartisan organization.

What You'll Do

Define American College Chapters are student-led initiatives which, with the guidance of the Define American team, will bring the conversation home. That means organizing as a group of students to tell your story to your college community. You'll receive the tools to reach out to people who have different opinions and backgrounds than you, and create an opportunity for mutual understanding.

Raise Awareness

Present new ideas through art, culture and social media. You can visit defineamerican.com/stories, and record your own video for free, to encourage people to walk a day in your shoes, or give your definition of what it means to be an "American." You can host cultural events which highlight the contributions of immigrant groups who attend your school. You can create public artwork that causes people to stop and think.

Change Dialogue

Share your story, and listen to the stories of others. Debates with college political clubs or lectures by guest speakers on the topic of immigration encourages civil dialogue about immigration issues. Only through understanding other points of view will two sides be able to see each other for who they are: human beings.

Change Culture

What needs to change in your campus, your city and your state, for immigrants to be truly accepted and integrated in everyday life? What cultural norms, like the use of the word "illegal(s)," to describe people, are dividing your community? Devise an action plan to confront and change culture, and reach out to your Define American network for help. For contact information for the Define American team, turn to the next page!

Who We Are



Define American was founded in April 2011 by Jose Antonio Vargas with Jake Brewer, Jehmu Greene, and Alicia Menendez.

Our team members are located across the country, in Louisville, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.

Julián Gómez (**chapters@defineamerican.com**,) is your primary contact at Define American. You can also reach out to the team through our social media accounts:



@DAChapters
@defineamerican



@DAChapters
@DefineAmerican



@defineamerican

Define American Chapter Principles

1 We Use The Power Of Our Stories
The power of storytelling to create meaningful change is at the core of our movement. Define American was founded in 2011, after our founder Jose Antonio Vargas “came out” as an undocumented immigrant in an essay published in the New York Times Magazine. Its publishing has inspired hundreds of people to share their immigrant/ ally stories publicly and online. And we’re just getting started.

2 We Elevate The Conversation About American Identity
At Define American we use stories, art, and culture to encourage our audience to think critically about American identity, and in the process inspire new ideas and conversations about our nation’s current immigration system. We believe it is important for these conversations to begin with asking the right questions rather than be about providing the right answers.

3 We Believe The United States Is, And Should Remain A Welcoming Nation
Our ideals remind us that we are all created equal and that our strength lies in the forging of a nation based on shared values and common purpose. We support a vision in which all people, including immigrants, have the opportunity to reach their greatest potential, engage with their community, and fully contribute their talents - expanding prosperity and wellbeing for all.

4 We Bring EVERYONE Into The Conversation
The conversations about immigrants frequently boils down to people not knowing that someone is an undocumented immigrant. At Define American, we realize that to create meaningful change, we must engage beyond our core base of supporters. This means that we avoid

polarizing language and actions, and instead focus on finding common ground and putting forth relatable stories and messages in an effort to create understanding outside our typical audience.

5 We Define American, Our Way
“How do YOU define American?” - this one question opens up infinite possibilities to accomplish innovative systemic change. We believe through being proactive, and not reactive, we can shift conversations about immigrants in the United States. Through provocative and uncomfortable conversations we create teachable moments, and we also use them to learn more about others’ points of views. Using this approach we aim to be trailblazers, and create a one-of-a-kind student movement.

10 Cultural Interventions that Define American

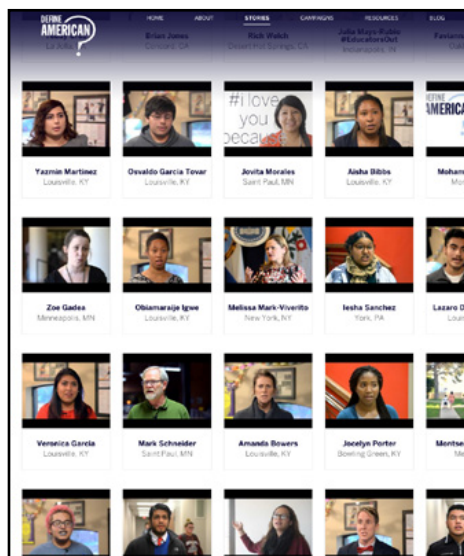
Art has the power to effect change. In the conversation around immigration, art has been a key tool to educate, mobilize and create culture. By creating culture we are able to change society. A Cultural Intervention is just that -- the presentation of an art project as a means to disrupt the dominant paradigm, thereby opening avenues for the voices often left unheard in the mainstream. Here are 10 Cultural Interventions that can be implemented on a college campus or in the greater community to continue to expand the conversation around immigration and American identity.

- Yosimar Reyes, Define American Arts Fellow

Story Booth:

We all have a story. Story booths in essence are as simple as setting a camera on a tripod and asking people to tell you a story. Story booths are a great way to collect stories and build a tapestry of narratives, and can be done easily on campus by setting up a camera or recorder and a table, and finding a quiet space for people to share their experiences. Documenting people's oral histories can help you build a tapestry of narratives that explore the complex human experience. You can get as creative as you want with it. Once completed you can share your story on our Define American Storytelling Platform.

Record your own video for free at defineamerican.com/stories



Beyond Borders Open-Mic:

An open mic is a live show where audience members may perform. Usually, the performers sign up in advance for a time slot with the host or master of ceremonies. Centering the show around the idea that immigration is a human trait is a good way to bring together community. Whatever the reason might be migration is a constant throughout history, and will remain a core element of our future. Hosting a Beyond Borders Open Mic not only expands the understanding of immigration, but also brings it home by personalizing it in songs or poems creating a more humane approach to it. Being able to ask oneself "How did I get here?" helps others better understand migrant experience. Hosting an Open Mic on a college campus promotes cultural understanding of immigrants as well as puts into question, "What does American identity really mean?"

Free Film - "Migration is Beautiful":

When it comes to having conversations about immigration, we quickly learn about polarizing viewpoints. Immigration is a complicated theme. Resources that cover this conversation in its full spectrum are limited. Learn about the artists that are taking this conversation into the streets and creating content that is both accessible and transformative.

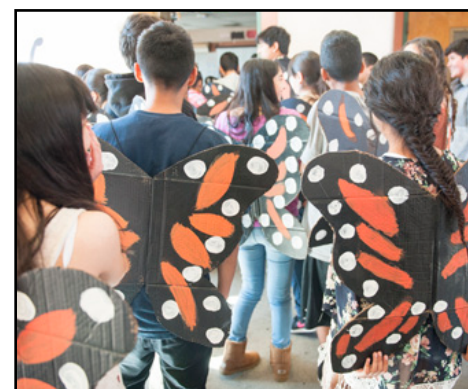
Watch Online for Free: youtu.be/LWE2T8Bx5d8?list=PL0523E0B4ECC1729B

Migrant Wings Butterfly Project:

Art has always been used as a tool for civic engagement. In social justice movements, art has been a way to spread awareness as well as build a sense of community. In immigrant rights movements the monarch butterfly has been used to symbolize migration as a natural course of life, being that monarch butterflies migrate seasonally regardless of human-made borders. Here are five easy projects inspired by the group CultureStrike for your immigration and identity events.

See CultureStrike's "5 Easy Art Projects for Your Pro-Immigrant Events":

youtu.be/vmxr1mGeSpk



Print Making Party:

Printmaking is a great way to build a collective message. Printmaking is the process of making artworks by printing, normally on paper. Rooted in social justice messaging, printmaking has been a way immigration movements have been able to make education fun and hands on. Hosting a printmaking party is a great way to skill share and facilitate a conversation around the intersections of art and migration.

Dignidad Rebelde Print Party:
youtu.be/ZU0zcaHNy8s

Define American Banner and Stencil Posters:

Banners are a great way to bring attention to a cause. Being able to display a banner in a public location helps bring visibility as well as engages the public. Stencil posters are also integral in art movements. Facilitating a banner and stencil making event makes the dialogue around immigration hands on and interactive.

How to Make Banners:
youtu.be/CTVLsZ6TISs

How to Make Stencil Posters:
youtu.be/RRw2CJ_W4NA



Pop-Up Art Exhibit:

“Migration is fundamentally about our right to move freely across planet Earth, in search of our fullest and best selves.” (CultureStrike) A pop-up art exhibit is a captivating way to spread a message. Hosting a pop-up art exhibit helps bring visibility to political art. Artists such as Favianna Rodriguez, Julio Salgado, Ernesto Yerena, Melanie Cervantes and Jesus Barraza (Dignidad Rebelde) are some of the leading artists producing work that challenges American identity across the country. You can do a call out to students and create your own Define American art portfolio to showcase on your campus.

Example Portfolio:

http://culturestrikeprints.flyingcart.com/?p=detail&pid=23&cat_id=

Creative Writing Workshop:

Stories are powerful. Through the process of sharing narratives we are able to connect beyond an intellectual level to a more human connection. Hosting a creative writing workshop that is centered on themes of Home, Migration, and Dreams, you can create an atmosphere where people feel free to share and create together. The goal of the workshop is to come to a collective understanding that being able to move freely throughout the world is a human right, and to establish the fact that the immigration problem is not a people problem, but a systemic problem.

Host a Film Screening:

Films are great conversation starters. You can contact your college activities board about securing funding to license a film screening, and host an event that everyone can come to. Some recommended films:

Don't Tell Anyone (No Le Digas a Nadie):
nodigasfilm.com

American Dreamers:
americandreamersdoc.com

Underwater Dreams:
underwaterdreamsfilm.com

For information and assistance in screening these films, or for more recommendations contact Julián Gómez, chapters@defineamerican.com



Book Club:

Literature is a powerful educational tool. Through reading we are able to be introduced to worlds unimaginable to us. Facilitating a conversation around a book is a great way to speak about deeper underlying messages. Books focusing on identity and citizenship to consider include:

- *Americanah* (2013) by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. It tells the story of a young Nigerian woman who emigrates to the United States for a university education and stays for work.
- *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) by Indian American author Jhumpa Lahiri is a book collection of nine short stories.
- *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) is a best-selling novel written by Dominican author Junot Díaz. Although a work of fiction, the novel is set in New Jersey where Díaz was raised and deals explicitly with his ancestral homeland's experience under dictator Rafael Trujillo.
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) by Native American author Sherman Alexie. The Absolutely True Diary is a first-person narrative by Native American teenager Arnold Spirit Jr., also known as “Junior”, a 14-year-old budding cartoonist. The book details Junior's life on the Spokane Indian Reservation and his decision, to go to an all-white public high school in an off-reservation town.



Documented (2014)

The documentary chronicles Jose Antonio Vargas' journey to America from the Philippines as a child; his journey through America as an immigration reform activist; and his journey inward as he re-connects with his mother, whom he hasn't seen in person in over 20 years.

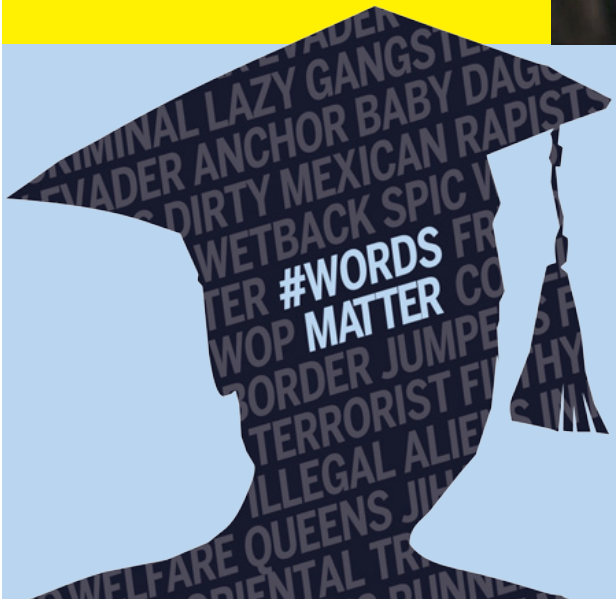
Define American College Chapter members will have access to screening discussion questions.

For more information about screening Define American films, contact Julián Gómez (julian@defineamerican.com) or on Twitter @DACChapters

White People (2015)

What does it mean to be white? MTV's "White People" is a groundbreaking documentary on race that aims to answer that question from the viewpoint of young white people living in America today. "White People" asks what's fair when it comes to affirmative action, if colorblindness is a good thing, what privilege really means, and what it's like to become the "white minority" in your neighborhood.

Define American College Chapter members will have access to screening discussion questions.



#WordsMatter

Define American urges everyone - politicians, media members and engaged citizens - to be constructive in their dialogue about immigrants and use terminology that is accurate and respectful of each person's human dignity. Specifically, the term "illegal," when used to describe a person (e.g. "illegal immigrant," "illegal alien," or "illegals"), and "anchor baby," are both inaccurate and dehumanizing.

Click here to download the media fact sheet, which you can encourage your campus media to use in their coverage of immigrants on campus.

How did you come here?

When did you first “feel American”?

How do you define American?

Share your Story



defineamerican.com