



THE BONNER CONGRESS



AN ABRIDGED
HANDBOOK FOR
BONNER
CONGRESS
REPRESENTATIVES

Greetings Congress Representatives!

My name is Marisa Frey and I am a Senior Bonner Leader at Allegheny College. I am also one of the Bonner Foundation Summer Interns for 2009. Since the Summer Leadership Institute Meeting in June, I have been working to improve the Bonner Congress experience through providing resources and materials to directors and coordinators, communicating with Congress Representatives, and updating the Wiki, to help make this the best year for Bonner Congress yet! This guide will serve as your back-to-basics guide to being a Bonner Congress Representative and aims to answer questions like:

- Why do we have a Bonner Congress?
- What is the role of a Bonner Congress Representative?
- What goes on at Bonner Congress Meetings?
- What goes on before and after Bonner Congress meetings?

I am really excited about this years Bonner Congress an I look forward to meeting all of you in the fall at the University of Richmond! Until then, if you have any questions feel free to be in touch with me or anyone at the Bonner Foundation in Princeton, NJ. Enjoy the start of fall and I will see October 23 at The University of Richmond or on the Bonner Network Forum!
Bonner Love, Marisa Frey (marisa@bonner.org)



Fall Bonner Congress Meeting
will be at University of
Richmond - October 23-25,
2009



Keys to success: Visit the Student Handbook Live for more information on being a Congress Rep. To view it, go to <http://bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/Bonner+Congress>



Bonner Student Congress Overview

Mission:

Since the inception of the Bonner Program, student voice has been instrumental in creating, implementing, and strengthening the program on the local and national levels.

What Does the Bonner Congress do?

As an advisory council to the Bonner Foundation, the Bonner Student Congress provides information, energy, and opportunities for student leadership within the Bonner Program. The Bonner Congress, when together, represents more than 2,500 students and connects more than 80 college and university campuses which engage over 2,500 Bonner Scholars and Leaders. See page 6 for a list of schools.

Why Be a Congress Representative?

Bonner Congress offers Representatives incredible networking opportunities that allow you to take advantage of all the Bonner Network has to offer. Meeting

other Bonner students with a wide array of ideas and opinions opens your mind to the incredible diversity of our Bonner Family. At Congress meetings you will have an opportunity to learn what is going on at other Bonner Programs in the network, hear about new initiatives from the foundation, and meet motivated, intelligent, service-minded students.

What will my time as a Bonner Congress Representative look like?

During your term as a Congress Representative, you will also be doing work on your own campuses to help bring back what you have learned and what has inspired you at the national meetings. This work will include sharing with your campus Bonner Program the new initiatives in the network. You'll also be able to take initiative on a project you propose and implement it back on campus. The opportunity to have a project of your own that will help improve your Bonner Program is your chance to emerge as a leader in the Bonner Network. See page 5 for more information



The History of Bonner Congress

Why Create a Bonner Congress? Since the inception of the Bonner Program, student input has been instrumental in creating, implementing, and strengthening the program on the local and national levels.

How did it all happen? The idea to form a student group with members from all of the Bonner Schools was proposed at the Summer Leadership Institute in the summer of 1994. The Student Coalition was soon created and convened in 1995. Because student leadership is a critical element in of the Bonner Program, the Student Coalition was reshaped and renamed two years later to become The Bonner Congress.

What does it mean to me? Bonner Congress answers the call for the deeply engrained need for student voice in the Bonner Program. As a Congress Representative it is important to keep in mind how vital your knowledge and input truly are in the shaping of the Bonner Program.

Congress Meetings

When and where?

Congress meetings are typically held in late October or early November and at the Summer Leadership Institute in June. The meeting moves to a different host campus each time. The next Fall Congress Meeting will be held at the University of Richmond from October 23-25, 2009.

What happens?

Every Bonner Congress Meeting is a little different, but generally it offers a series of workshops and presentations designed to give you the skills and resources to take the ideas and inspiration you have and put them into action!

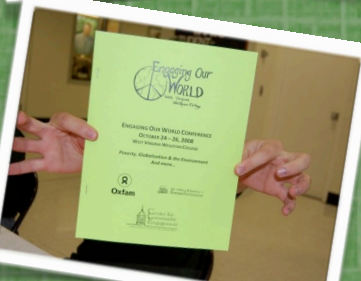
What do I need to bring with me?

Before attending Bonner Congress, it is the responsibility of the Representative to gather as much information as possible about the assets and challenges of your

community and your Bonner Program. You will also be asked to identify a big idea that you care about for improving your Bonner Program and propose it. You should bring your proposal and feedback materials to the meetings. It is also important to keep updated on what is going on with the networking and Serve 2.0 initiatives as well as the other awesome projects currently underway in the national network.

You should also be sure to have completed your Bonner Congress Project Proposal. You should be sure to have submitted it to the Bonner Foundation by October 1, 2009. Bring your proposal and the feedback you receive to the Fall Congress Meeting for use in our working sessions.

The amount of time and effort you put into your time as a Congress Rep will greatly determine how much you and your program gain from the experience. Be sure to come with an open mind, a thirst for inspiration, and a good attitude!



“Attending congress was definitely a turning point in my growth as a Bonner Scholar. I realized that there was a national network of motivated, passionate, and engaged students who were able to give me advice and support. It really is a Bonner Family - a close-knit group of students committed to service and committed to each other. I wish that every Bonner could get a sense of the larger community at some point in their college experience” -Kelly Behrend, Bonner Scholar at University of Richmond

Meet with your Bonner administrators when you get back from the Congress Meeting. Discuss and set 1-2 specific goals for what you hope to accomplish as a Congress Representative, outside of the project you have already proposed.

Ask for support from your coordinator and director or for help in connecting you with others on campus. Share your new action plan with them.

Keep your Bonner Program and administration team informed about what you are working on, news from other Reps or the Foundation, or any concerns you may have.

Keep in touch with other Congress Reps about the experiences you are having with implementing your big idea on campus or on how you have shared your Congress experience on your campus. Use the Wiki and the Bonner Network Forum to stay connected to others.

Your Role as a Bonner Congress Representative

The Bonner Congress is composed of students engaged in service who are enthusiastic, creative, and committed to serving others. As a student group, they seek to network and support students who are starting programs. Serving their fellow Bonners is often best accomplished when Congress Reps set the example of service as a mindset.

Bonner Congress Representatives are not simply qualified people with potential. Each Congress Representative is charged to demonstrate leadership on campus and in the network.

For example, Representatives report on the national meeting, communicate with each other and the foundation, and lead a project that they propose.

See the Project Proposal Information on page 5 for more information.

Bonner Congress Representatives are naturally leaders within their own programs. They possess key qualities that fit with the role. Examples of these qualities include:

- Resourcefulness
- Leadership
- Coachability
- Enthusiasm
- Delegation

Take a look at the videos on the Bonner YouTube Channel (www.youtube.com) to learn more about what it means to be a Bonner Congress Representative, and how each of these qualities are useful in your role as a leader in your Bonner Program



Expectations of a Congress Representative

Each student serves at least two years as a Bonner Congress Representative. It is recommended that Representatives have at least one year's experience in the Bonner Program before becoming Representatives. During their term, Congress Representatives are required to attend all Congress meetings. Meetings are held in the fall of every school year and in the summer shortly after school is dismissed.

Bonner Congress Representatives are asked to make a significant time commitment to the position. Congress Reps should plan on spending about 20 hours each semester, including weekly correspondence online and over the phone about their projects. Students should not accept the position if they foresee that they will be able to make this commitment.

Representing Through Bonner Congress

As a Bonner Congress Representative, you are representing your peers to the Foundation and the national network. You can do this by calling or emailing the Foundation, and encouraging others in our program to do so. You can also encourage peers to express concerns, questions, issues, inspirations, and thanks to you and the Foundation so that they may be addressed. It is also important to share the best practices from your campus that can motivate and inspire others. **You are also representing the Foundation and the national network to your peers.** This is done through encouraging and facilitating communication with the foundation staff, bringing the new initiatives from the Foundation to your campus program, and working to share new projects and initiatives from across the National Network with your campus and your program. **Finally, you are representing Bonner to the nation and the world** Talk, share, and explore options to keep Bonner in your life in every possible way. Be an ambassador for Bonner and your school and be sure to remain professional when you represent them.

NEW! The Bonner Congress Project Proposal

Designed to help Congress Representatives put their “big ideas” into action!

Why have a Bonner Congress Project Proposal?

In the past, Congress Reps have said that they had very few ways to channel all of the inspiration and enthusiasm they gained from the national meetings. The Bonner Congress Project Proposal is designed to help students take ownership over an idea of their own and design an action plan to follow through with after the national meetings

What is it? Each schools Congress Representatives will be asked to submit a written or video proposal outlining a big idea they have to improve one area in their Bonner Program. Representatives from the same school can propose the same or different projects. Some examples of these projects include:

- Bringing Issue-Focused Model to Campus
- Improving Bonner Orientation (Bonner 101)
- Building Training and Enrichment Activities
- Building a Bonner Leadership Team
- Improving your program’s Recruitment and Selection process
- Improving the Freshman Class Placement Process
- Improving your First Year Service Trip
- Improving your Sophomore Service Exchange
- Working on Summer Placements

- Improving Junior Year Placements
- Creating and Exploring International Service Projects
- Building your Rising Senior Enrichment Fund
- Improving Senior Placements
- Creating a venue for Senior Presentation of Service

Your proposal should include a brief history of the challenges you have chosen to tackle with your big idea. It should also contain an outline of your big idea. This should include a brief summary of the issues, needs, or gaps your idea seeks to improve, as well as the symptoms of these needs. Finally, it should have a list of the students, staff, faculty, or community partners your big idea involves. Be sure to describe how the implementation of your big idea will be assisted by your congress experience. In this section you should also explain in detail how your big idea will address the root issues of the challenges you are working with.

We are motivated by the potential that Bonner Congress Representatives have shown in the past, and look forward to hearing more about this year’s Project Proposals.

For more information on the Bonner Congress Project Proposal and to submit your Proposal, please visit the Bonner Congress Wiki Page at [http://
bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/
Bonner+Congress](http://bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/Bonner+Congress).



Communicating Between National Meetings

Communication is key in the Bonner Congress Experience.

Congress Representatives will make a great number of lasting connections at National Bonner Meetings. It is essential that we each make an effort to follow-up with the students, administrators, or Bonner Foundation Staff you worked with during the meeting.

Using the Bonner Network's Social Media Tools

The Bonner Network has a few helpful ways for staying in touch and working to make progress in your program and change in your community. First, take a moment to join the Bonner Congress Group on Facebook. This is an easy way to reach out to the Bonner Congress members in the Facebook community. You can join the group at: http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1243740090&v=feed&story_fbid=114016009236#/home.php?ref=home

Also be sure to visit the Bonner Student Congress portion of the Bonner Network Wiki! It has recently been updated to include the latest news and resources for Bonner Congress Representatives! You can view it at: <http://bonnernetwork.pbworks.com/Bonner+Congress>.



“My Congress experience lasted far beyond the national meetings”
-Former Bonner Congress Representative

The Bonner Network Forum

The Bonner Network Forum is designed to help members of the Bonner Network keep in touch and discuss ideas and challenges they are facing within their communities, campuses, or Bonner Programs. To visit and create a profile, go to: <http://bonnerforum.ning.com/>

The Bonner Congress Group on the Bonner Network Forum is specifically designed to share information related to Bonner Congress. You can go here to get updates from other Representatives or the Foundation, and to post discussion topics. To join the group, go to: <http://bonnerforum.ning.com/group/bonnercongress>

