

# Easy Effort, High Impact, Wide Reach: Cultivating Community Engagement with a Low-Tech Whiteboard

A prominently placed whiteboard can be a simple inexpensive, yet highly effective outreach tool, serving as a catalyst for diverse forms of self-expression, dialog, knowledge sharing, and information gathering.

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## Benefits to students



- **Outlet for self-expression:** voice and visibility for a diverse range of ideas (what peace means to you, favorite podcast, what you like about yourself)
- **Peer-to-peer communication:** advice for navigating college life (pro tips for finals, favorite professor, tips for protecting online privacy, )
- **Community building:** share college experiences (winter term project, research paper topic, best book assigned for a class)
- **Tie in to campus activities:** (club fair, study away fair, course registration)
- **Mental health:** take a break from academic work (draw/doodle your pet, leave an encouraging note, write a haiku)
- **Connect to current events:** (National Poetry Week/Black poet that changed your life, where/when will you be voting, favorite Prince song)

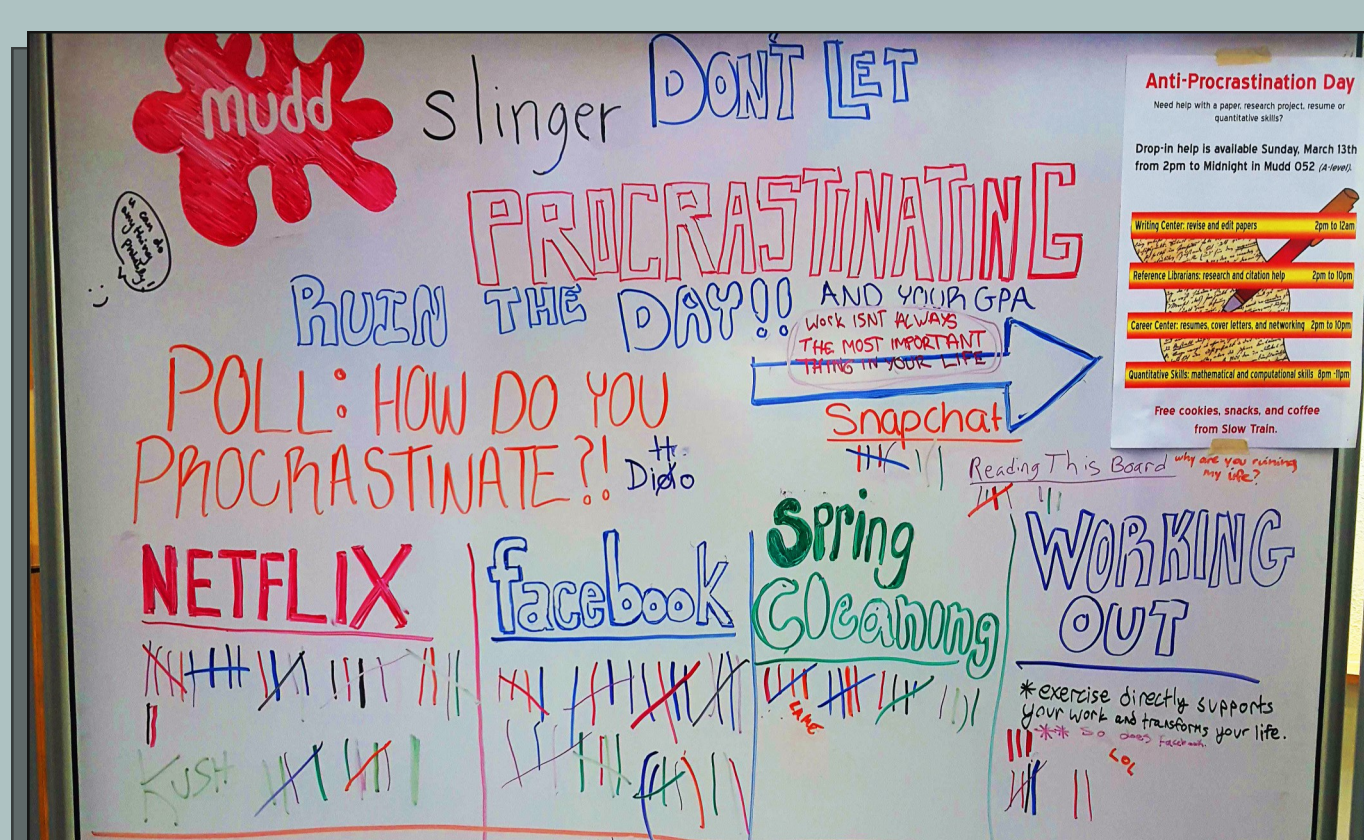


Draw a doodle of your pet.

## Benefits to the library

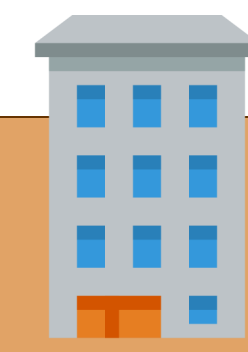


- **Crowdsourced learning tool:** include sneaky info lit (fake news/favorite trusted news source, favorite database, why you like OhioLINK)
- **Data collection:** (opinion of furniture samples, what library should offer in the future, favorite study spaces)
- **Marketing/outreach:** promote library resources and events (library café menu choices, Anti-Procrastination Day, Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon/favorite non-dude artist)
- **Quick 'n easy:** supply markers, add a question, erase when board is full (repeat!)
- **Staffing:** any staff member, including student assistants, can do it in less than 5 minutes
- **Cost-effective:** relatively inexpensive upfront and ongoing costs



Poll: how do you procrastinate?

## Benefits to the institution



- **Improve communication:** raise awareness of campus events/services (weekend plans)
- **Recruitment:** give a sense of campus life to prospectives (favorite class)
- **Retention:** positive and supportive posts (advice/encouragement during stressful periods)
- **Diversity:** create welcoming atmosphere for underrepresented groups (favorite Latinx author)
- **Alumni connections:** reunion events (favorite library memory)



What was your favorite book when you were a kid?



What's your favorite library memory?

## Best practices



- **Materials:** large board with plenty of space, lots of colorful markers
- **Location:** visible, high-traffic area
- **Branding:** give it a name so everyone knows what to call it
- **Prompts:** word questions to elicit best responses, encourage positivity, use a variety of question types (draw a picture, open-ended, polls)
- **Management:** change prompts frequently, be prepared to erase inappropriate comments (but don't censor unnecessarily)
- **Surprises happen!** move quickly to a new topic if something doesn't catch on; be flexible if the board is "commandeered"
- **Assessment:** document with photos, year-end review, ensure alignment with library goals, plan for next year



What non-dude artist should people know about?