

**TRAILBLAZERS
LET'S EXPLODE CREATIVELY
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The student division is setting the pace for the future in terms of human relationships, communications and concept development. Each individual's ideas and thought processes are unique simply by the fact that if you ask a group of students to draw or describe the word "creativity," each person will give you a different response. Being creative doesn't just mean thinking outside the box, and it's not a term that only pertains to artists. To me, being creative means exploding your heart's capacity at any given moment. It means throwing out the ideas originating from human impulses. It means singing that tune the way you think it should be sung. Now that's creative.

As a student division member and a person born into the practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, I have learned that the more creative we become, the more we are able to inspire others. What better atmosphere to explode creatively than in college! The workings of the universe are still very new to college students. And as our campus groups become larger and students become smarter, the formal aspects of standard SGI meetings may not be as attractive as they once were for our generation. Many students today can run circles around the standard gongyo, explanation, dialogue presentation, experience and final words meeting format with their intellect and spend forever analyzing what was said before they begin practicing. I don't mean to dismiss our heartfelt and sincere explanations, but I think what will inspire students the most is our creative hearts.

The student division members in Southern California are beginning to stretch their creative muscle in terms of student-sponsored Buddhist meetings. In our first ever College Explosion meeting, held on April 28, 2001 — with a combined effort of more than eight colleges and university campus clubs — we have challenged the standard meeting formats, not just so we can say, "Look, we came up with a different way," but to expand and come up with new ways of attracting bright and intelligent college students. We came up with one creative idea on top of another, until we were ready to explode on April 28.

I also feel that we can be creative in our campus clubs. As a Value Creation Society campus club president at the University of Southern California for two years, I know it can be an obstacle just getting everyone together at the same time. In this case, it may be creative and appropriate to just have a conference call with all the students in your club to touch base and stimulate more creative ideas. Furthermore, we can't make all of our campus meetings because we have to study.

Well, how about making your meeting a study meeting and have someone bring a Buddhist article to study during a coffee break? Sometimes, social events are more effective in getting students' creative hearts involved. Go bowling, running, eating or even throw a huge campus party together.

Establishing heart-to-heart connections with each other is just as important as the intellectual understanding of our practice. Maybe these are not the most creative ideas, but you get my point.

So how can you be creative? Since your creative impulse is as unique as mine, I

can't answer that question for you. Being creative is not easy either. Sometimes our creativity doesn't make sense to others, so we have to make sure that everyone will be able to understand our point without getting lost. I find that a good way to stimulate creative ideas is to be involved in an array of diverse activities in life, both educational and cultural. An amazing musician and fellow SGI-USA member, Miguel Atwood-Ferguson, enlightened me to something once. I believe it will also hold true in your creative efforts: "As long as it comes from the heart, it will be the right one."