

10 TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING A COLLEGE AUDIENCE – KIP FULBECK

College students are notoriously busy, overcommitted, flakey, and difficult to bring out for anything (or anyone) not immediately recognizable by name. Having sent Kip Fulbeck to hundreds of schools, we've seen audiences ranging from 25 people to 2500 ... It's all based on the school, the time of year, and how the show is marketed.

Kip is a fantastic performer, but he needs energized people in those seats to really shine – that's where you come in. Most students don't know who he is, and unfortunately, the typical college speaker isn't very dynamic so students are naturally suspect. What you have to do is let students know how special this event is and how amazing it can be. Here are 10 ideas to help you make the show a success

1. Designate staff and students to planning

Just having a couple students put up fliers the week before is a recipe for a bad turnout. You need to have people dedicated to event, and they need to be active on a daily basis. So many groups can be involved: departments, student organizations, individual faculty and staff, classes, campus and area newspapers, radio & television stations, bloggers, local area groups, etc. These groups and people need to be contacted *personally* and followed up with. Email is not enough

2. Begin advertising early

Some schools begin plugging Kip's visit 6 months or more before he comes, and building from there. This has proven to be the best method. At a bare minimum, you should be giving people information at least 1 month prior

3. Book a smaller venue

A completely filled smaller theater or auditorium always beats a half-empty larger one. Audiences feel more excited (and comfortable) if they are packed in rather than sitting around empty chairs. Estimate how many students you typically get at your events and book accordingly. You're guaranteed a better show if people are standing in the aisles as opposed to sitting next to empty rows

4. Book the right space

Pick a space that can go fully dark, with a good sound system and a strong data projector. The more lighting control, the better. A theater space with raked seating is always preferable to a flat ballroom or classroom. An ideal space has a raised stage, center and side spotlights, and no windows

5. Book the right date & time

It's hard to believe, but we've actually had colleges book Kip for a Sunday morning event and be surprised when the turnout was low. Use your campus knowledge and book according to when you know students can attend. And be especially vigilant about making sure there are no conflicts (see #6)

6. Check & Plan for Conflicting Events

Colleges are notorious for not communicating between departments & areas. Most schools avoid booking during finals week, but this is just the tip of the iceberg. Cross-booking against other speakers, concerts, sporting events, Greek activities or elections can easily cut your audience in half. Plan ahead using your local knowledge. For example, if your school is a perennial basketball powerhouse, don't book a date in March during the NCAA tournament

7. Utilize Non-Traditional Advertising

Fliers, emails, and Facebook invites are a good start and should be implemented, but students are already inundated with these on a daily basis. We've found that using our promotional materials (located in the images section) works well for colleges – especially the "Other" and "Race, Sex & Tattoos" – but what works even better are non-traditional routes. Many schools do a version of Kip's *Hapa Project* with their own students and post these prominently. Colorado State printed out life-size cardboard cutouts of Kip and placed them in the student center. They started out the first week with a blank cutout printed with "Who is this man?" and added features weekly until it was a life-size replica. Their ballroom was filled

8. Emphasize Kip's pop-culture credentials & comedy

Kip is unlike any other speaker your school has had. Even calling him a "speaker" is limiting, since he's a filmmaker, writer, slam poet, artist and world-ranked athlete as well. He's been featured on MTV, The TODAY Show, CNN, and many others. He's very pop-culture savvy, and his performances are filled with current events and pop culture. Plus, he's performed as a stand-up comedian as well

9. Speak to individual faculty about requiring student attendance

Kip's work fits readily into many areas and his performances make great supplements to classes. Also, because of his academic credentials, most faculty (when given enough information) are very open to including his appearance as a requirement or extra credit. Classes to particularly target include Anthropology, Art, Communication, Ethnic Studies, Literature/Creative Writing, Psychology, Sociology, and Women's Studies. Faculty should be contacted on an individual basis (preferably in person) and followed up with

10. Contact the Art Department

Many sponsors are not in contact with their college's Art Departments, and this is a department that should be especially communicated with. Kip's reputation in the art world is prestigious, and both undergraduate and graduate Art students will value the opportunity to meet with him