

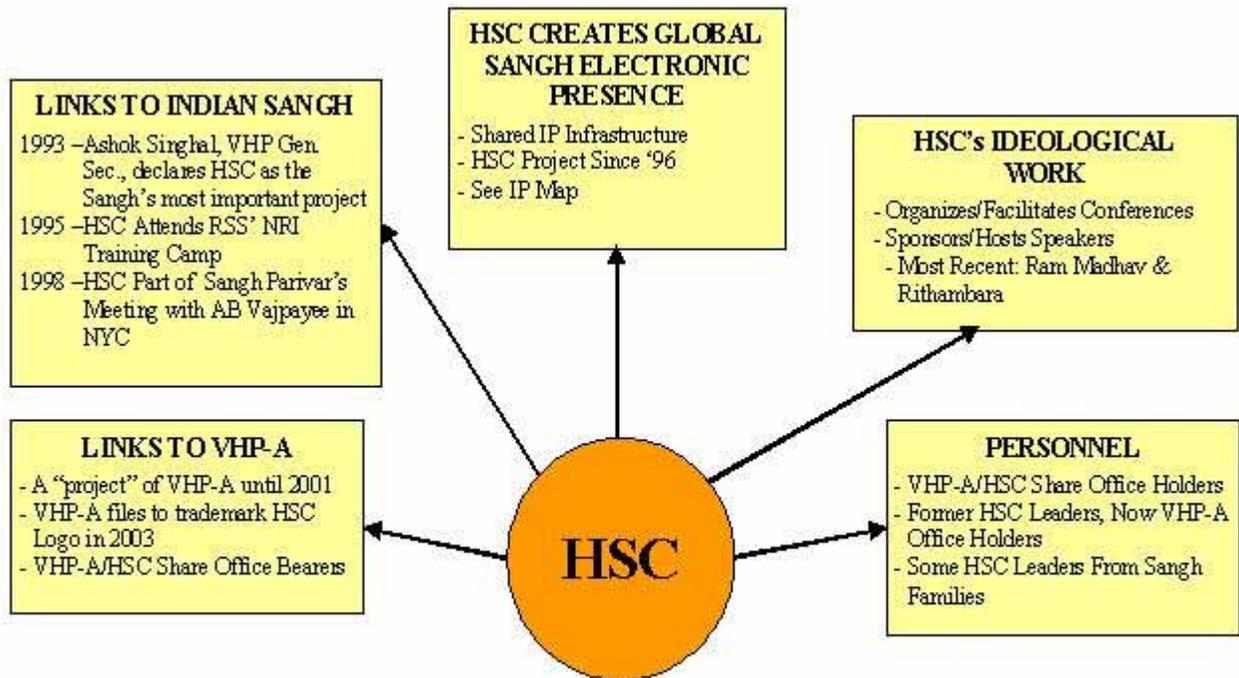
Unmistakably Sangh: The National HSC and its Hindutva Agenda

An Executive Summary

The Hindu Students Council (HSC) is a national network of campus-based organizations in the United States with the stated goal being to “Provide opportunities to learn about Hindu heritage and culture. Foster awareness of issues affecting Hindus. Provide SEVA (service) to the community.”¹ On several distinct occasions, the National HSC (located in Houston TX) has asserted that the HSC is not connected to any political movement and that it is independent of the Sangh Parivar. This report, UNMISTAKABLY SANGH, demonstrates that despite the denials, the HSC has been a Sangh project from its inception. In the context of a globalizing Sangh Parivar, the HSC remains an integral component of the Parivar’s overseas operations. *Unmistakably Sangh* documents the origins, methods and practices of the HSC. In writing this report, the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH) is motivated by the concern that while the National HSC is clearly part of the global Sangh Parivar, members in local chapters of HSC on university campuses may be unaware of these political connections. As such, many college students and others may be participating in the activities of an organization whose political agenda they had no intent of legitimizing. As a result of this concern, and because of a desire to engage in a productive dialogue with such local chapters, CSFH started the Truth Out on HSCs!² Campaign last year. In the months since, CSFH has collected and summarized evidence about the connections between the National HSC and the global Sangh Parivar. This report consolidates and presents said evidence.

The HSC was founded in 1990 as a project of the VHP of America. In 1993, Ashok Singhal, then General Secretary of the VHP, declared the HSC to be one of VHP’s most important overseas projects: “Now, the first project we have in mind is strengthening the Hindu Student Council.”³ The National HSC bizarrely claims that it “has been independently run since 1993,”⁴ despite continuous and consistent affiliation with the VHP and other Sangh Parivar organizations. In 1995, HSC members went to Gujarat and attended a RSS-conducted shibir for NRIs concerning Sangh ideology. In 1996, HSC and VHP of America worked together to set up GHEN/Hindunet, which has since become the hub for the electronic infrastructure of the global Sangh Parivar. Most major Sangh entities, including the RSS, ABVP, VHP, and Seva Bharati, are all hosted on the same server cluster in California. In 1997, HSC collaborated with other Sangh Parivar groups to organize what they called the Freedom Festival in the US. In 1998, HSC was part of a Sangh delegation that met with AB Vajpayee during his visit to the US. And then there are the VHPA tax returns that list HSC as one its projects as late as 2001. Even after HSC filed for independent legal status as a non-profit organization, the VHPA filed a claim of ownership of the HSC logo and slogan with the US Patents Office – in 2004. In 2005, HSC, along with the global Sangh Parivar, organized the Dharma conference, and over the last three years has co-hosted such Sangh leaders as Ram Madhav and Sadhvi Rithambara.

In sum, this report demonstrates the continued affiliation of the National HSC with the Sangh Parivar. Yet, in spite of this clear evidence, the National HSC continues to deny its connections with the Sangh Parivar. The value of the HSC’s work for the Sangh is illustrated in the graphic below. While the national HSC performed an essential service for the Sangh Parivar in developing the Sangh’s electronic infrastructure, its contribution to these organizations consisted of considerably more than creating websites for the RSS and its affiliates. For instance, the VHP Governing Council listserve, which was possibly the tool for coordination of the VHP’s global operations, was carried on the GHEN/Hindunet servers. Moreover, the Freedom Festival and Dharma Conference, along with other such events, represent a way for Sangh ideologues to propogate their message under the cover of multiculturalism. The evidence which CSFH presents here reveals an undeniable and close alliance between the National HSC and the global Sangh Parivar. We are disturbed that hundreds of HSC members in local chapters may be unaware of these connections between their organization and the Sangh Parivar. Hence, in the spirit of engagement, we ask the National HSC a simple question: How does the National HSC explain its continuing links with the VHP-A and the Sangh Parivar years after it claimed to have become an “independently run organization?”



¹ See <http://www.hscnet.org/aboutus.php>

² See <http://hsctruthout.stopfundinghate.org/>

³ See http://hsctruthout.stopfundinghate.org/PRs/docs/Singhal_Vision-2000_Int.pdf

⁴ See <http://www.hscnet.org/fact.php>