A Tale of One City

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Problem

De facto segregation coupled with widespread misunderstanding and miscommunication between the different socioeconomic and ethnic groups in Dallas.

Objective

To publish a literary magazine from submissions of Dallas-area high school students from all walks of life. Submissions of poetry, prose, and art will be accepted that address prompts such as "What is Dallas?" "Who lives in Dallas?" and "What is it like to live in Dallas?" We plan to distribute the magazine in print and online across the city and host a coffee house event on campus during which authors and artists of winning submissions can showcase their work. The grand prizewinner will be awarded a scholarship.

Anticipated Result

To open a dialogue between otherwise separated citizens of Dallas and foster inter-communication among area youth.

Dallas is a segregated city. From the neatly kept lawns of the city's wealthiest districts to the neglected neighborhoods where families live paycheck to paycheck, the cavernous divide between rich and poor broadens by the day. Yet the heart of this problem lies not in economics, demographics, nor any other difference, but rather in the fog of mutual misunderstanding that hangs over the city. We believe this misunderstanding is ultimately a lack of communication. This problem that has left the city council scratching its head time and time again has been pursued before – always with the noblest intentions, but never from the best angle. And now, Dallas is hungry for dialogue.

We intend to create, edit, and distribute a biannual publication in which area high school students can communicate their diverse experiences through art, poetry, and prose. We will collaborate with high school teachers and their pupils providing prompts that ask students to express their understanding of what it means to live in Dallas. Students' entries, submitted online through the future Tale of One City website, will naturally address such pressing issues as de facto segregation, the socioeconomic divide, materialism, and educational inequality, thus establishing a conversation between the two Dallases. The endeavor will also aim to celebrate differences, find common ground, and above all inspire the young Dallasite to seek unity. We trust our endeavor will achieve these goals based on our beliefs in the strength of a liberal arts education, in the power of creative expression, and in the promise of change in our city.

Previous attempts to end segregation in Dallas have failed. Since the Supreme Court's famed 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the city of Dallas has resisted efforts to desegregate its schools. Starting in 1961 with the Dallas School Board's ineffective "Stairstep Plan," Dallas began to recognize piecemeal the importance of addressing the issue of segregated schools. Through the years, Dallas officials drafted and recalled plans numerous times but to little avail. These initiatives failed to do more than bus students across town and rezone school districts countless times, ultimately fostering an ideological divide marked by resentment and enmity. This is not to say that the city has made no improvements; Judge Harold "Barefoot" Sanders worked for twenty years to curtail segregation, overseeing the end of bussing, the creation of magnet schools, and the establishment of local learning centers. However, most aspects of Dallas

life still remain segregated and scarred by the seeds of socioeconomic, racial, and educational divide sown throughout its history.

In the spirit of unity, we will reach out to 69 of Dallas' high schools by contacting both the administration and the English departments of 34 DISD schools, 34 private schools, and Highland Park High School. The application process will be tailored to fit the level of participation of each school. For schools whose faculty and administration show strong interest and support in the project, teachers will be asked to present the top 10% of submissions for review. For schools with which a less personal relationship is established, interested students will be able to submit their work individually to the web address featured on flyers posted around their respective campuses.

The student whose work is determined to best embody the current state of affairs in Dallas and offer the best insight towards unity will be awarded with a scholarship check whose sum will be determined as allowed by the budget. Other top submissions will be chosen for publication by a committee made up of volunteer undergraduate students and willing faculty. After the magazine is formatted and printed, we will distribute it both electronically on our website and in print to all participating high schools as well as strategically and politically important community locations in order to foster the dialogue we so desperately need. We will further seek attention from local media in attempt to broaden the impact of our endeavor. The project will culminate with an end-of-the-semester coffee house night held at SMU where the winning students will be invited to read their pieces aloud to a crowd of fellow student writers and members of the Dallas community.

Timeline

Mid-February	Begin contacting high schools Contract and create website and flyers Distribute information and call for submissions
April 1	Submission deadline for high school students
Mid-April	Winning submissions chosen by committee Format magazine for print Send to printers
Late April	Post magazine to website Distribute magazine to winners and participating schools
Mid-May	Host coffee house on campus Award scholarship Prepare for next semester's publication Recruit new SMU team members to inherit magazine

Budget

$1,000	Website creation and maintenance, graphic design fees
$500	Grand Prize Scholarship
$3,000	Printing fees for magazine, flyers, and submissions
$400	Food, space, rentals, and décor for coffee house
$100	Gas and transportation costs for travel to area schools

Person responsible for funds: Drake A. ("Drew") Konow II

Signature of the above: _____