Recruiting and Retaining Members

Whether it is the beginning of the year or the middle of the year, now is the time to recruit! An organization can always use new ideas and energy!

Before beginning the recruitment process

Before beginning the recruitment process, your organization must identify the kinds of skills and attributes you are trying to recruit, as well as identify why those students might want to join (one way to do this is by asking current members why they joined). Your goal should include the recruiting of people who will help make your organization the best it can be.

Reasons that students get involved

An important component of a student organization is to understand why members want to join a group.

For some, the choice is based on academic concerns. Students will join groups that complement their fields of study to create networks and later use their contacts for respective jobs.

Another major reason individuals will join a group is to expand their circle of friends and acquaintances. Particularly at the college level, students look to expand their social networks.

Individuals will also join a group to gain new experiences and broaden their perspectives.

In order to gain an understanding of what draws people to an organization, ask current and former members. By doing some research, an organization can find the most effective methods of promoting their group.

Benefits and Opportunities

Make a list of the benefits and opportunities that new members will receive for their involvement (i.e., input in bringing entertainment to campus, free admission to your organization’s events, meeting people, skill enhancement in areas of publicity and advertising...). Writing is like all other skills — it takes discipline and practice to improve. Using these suggestions will give you the tools you need to ensure more effective and concise writing.

Define the kind of member you want to recruit

List the qualifications that you are looking for in the new blood of your organization. For example: enthusiasm, skills, abilities, motivation, commitment to the organization, interest in the organization’s goals and objectives. After you have decided all of this, you are ready to begin your recruitment campaign! Recruitment requires the involvement of everyone in your organization!
Recruitment Techniques

**Personal contact/word of mouth**
People are more likely to get involved if a friend or neighbor personally asks them to get involved.
- Introduce yourself and describe your organization and its goals.
- Answer questions about the organization.
- Have a list of the benefits and a sample of what your organization does. Attach the date and time of your next meeting and invite them.
- Take down names and phone numbers so you can call and remind them of the meeting.
- Offer to walk with them to the next meeting.

**Announcements**
Get the word out! Send information to your target population with a tear off on the bottom to send back with their names and phone numbers. Include the purpose of your organization, goals, upcoming events, benefits of joining, and your meeting dates, time and location. Use posters, radio announcements and campus newspaper classified ads.

**At your next event**
Have an information table with a sign-up sheet for prospective members. Have someone there to answer questions.

**Recruit within the publicity of your event**
On an advertisement for your next event, recruit new members with a simple “If you are interested in helping plan our next event call...”

**Interactive technology**
If your group has a homepage or Web site, add a section detailing how to join your organization. If your group does not have either, create one. Technology savvy organizations appeal to today’s student and helps your organization reach thousands of students by simply pointing and clicking.

**Work with other groups**
One of the great ways to get your group’s name out is to co-sponsor events with other student groups. Not only can your combined resources lead to a more successful event, but students will often belong to more than one student organization. It can only help your group to try to recruit members of other groups.

**Be available**
The most important things is to be available to answer questions or help new members join. If interested individuals are unable to contact someone from your organization, your publicity efforts have gone to waste. You may want to create the position of Head Recruiter or create a recruiting committee to facilitate making sure new members can get in touch with your organization.

New Member Orientation

Once you have recruited new members, a solid orientation is the first step in keeping them!

**Training Topics**
- constitution and bylaws
- organizational structure
- budget
- organization files and office space
- past successes of the organization

**Methods**
- training from veteran members
- icebreakers/socials for all members
- a “meet the new members” meeting
- a list of their names in a newsletter or minutes of a meeting
- invitation to a board and/or executive council meeting

**Growth**
- learning new skills in leadership management, programming, and inter-personal relations
- accepting responsibility

**Recognition**
- special benefits and privileges
- recognition from others
- personal satisfaction

**Achievement**
- seeing the achievement of a goal
- developing personally
- building a strong resume
- satisfaction of having impact on the environment

**Participation**
- applying new skills
- managing groups
- being involved in program production

**Enjoyment**
- new friends
- fun
- for a job well done
- the satisfaction of serving others