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 needs of the people you are trying to recruit and identify why those students might want to join. (One way to do this is by asking current members why they joined.) Keep in mind what current group members need while you attempt to earn the loyalty, commitment and energy of new members. Your organization also needs to look at what type of person your organization needs and begin recruiting people who will help make your organization the best it can be.

GROUP MEMBERS NEED:

• to have a sense of belonging – the feeling that they are sincerely welcome and needed.
• to share in planning the group’s objectives.
• to know that the goals are obtainable and make sense.
• to feel that what they are doing has real purpose and contributes to a greater good.
• to feel that the organization is making a difference.
• to feel that the value of their contributions extends beyond personal gain and the group itself.
• to see that progress is being made toward goals.
• to share in making the ground rules by which the group can live and work toward its goals.
• to know what is expected of them and to be kept informed.
• to have some responsibilities that challenge and contribute toward reaching the goals.
• to have confidence in the organization leaders to lead the organization well, treat members consistently and fairly, recognize member accomplishments and trust the members.

REASONS THAT STUDENTS GET INVOLVED

An important component of a student organization is to understand why their members or possible members will want to join their group. There are five main reasons why people volunteer.

Growth

• learning new skills in leadership management, programming and interpersonal 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
• having satisfaction in serving others
Recruiting and Retaining Members

The only way an organization can get good understanding of what draws people to their groups is to 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, etc.)

**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, ability, 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! This involves everyone in your organization!

**WHY RECRUITMENT PLANS FAIL**

- Assume the only motivation is food/money
- Assume you know what motivates your members
- Not following through
- Lack of training or tools
- Expecting immediate results

**RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES**

**Personal Contact / Word of Mouth**

People are much 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. Get their 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 date, time and location. Use posters, radio announcements and campus newspaper classified ads.

**At Your Next Event**
Recruiting and Retaining Members

Have an information table with a sign-up sheet for potential members. Have someone there to answer questions.

*Recruit Within the Publicity of Your Event*
On the advertisement for your event, recruit new members with a simple “If you are interested in helping plan our next event call…”

*Interactive Technology*
Using your Mines Link page, and other social media platforms to provide information about your organization and how to join.

*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 members from both groups will work together and allow for a better understanding of each other. Students will often belong to more than one student organization, so it can only help your group to try to recruit members of other groups.

*Be Available*
One of the most important things to make sure of whenever you’re looking to recruit new members is to be available to answer questions or help new members join. All your publicity may be ineffective if interested individuals are unable to contact someone from your organization. You may even create the position of Head Recruiter or create a recruitment committee to facilitate making sure new members can get in touch with your organization.

*CREATE OPTIMAL EXPERIENCES*
10 characteristics of optimal experiences:

1. **Excitement:** When people describe these experiences, they use words like challenging, rewarding, and exciting.

2. **Involvement:** A sense of participation.

3. **Action:** A sense that we’re making some of these things come about.

4. **Fulfillment:** So involved in the activity that you lose track of time; nothing else seems to matter.

5. **Freedom:** Team members do not feel forced to repeat the same exhausting motions, adding to a feeling of helplessness.

6. **Appropriateness:** There is something for you to do and you’re capable of doing it. It’s a balance between the challenges of a given situation and the skills you bring to it. The challenge is an opportunity for action that you’re able to respond to.
Recruiting and Retaining Members

7. Meaningfulness: What you’re doing is something that needs to be done, that is useful and that has meaning.

8. Control: You feel a sense of control over your actions.

9. Challenge: It’s a challenging activity that requires skill. (Playing tennis is not fun if the opponents are mismatched.)

10. Understanding: Not “Why am I doing this?” (that question is answered)

INTRINSICALLY INTERESTING TASKS HAVE FOUR ELEMENTS:

- Meaningfulness
- Impact
- Choice
- Competence

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/executive council meeting